

ENGLAND TO DELHI.

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BENARES.

ENGLAND TO DELHI:

A NARRATIVE OF INDIAN TRAVEL.

BY

JOHN MATHESON,

GLASGOW.

*'The proper means of increasing the love we bear our
native country is to reside some time in a foreign one.'*

SHENSTONE.

WITH A MAP AND EIGHTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS DRAWN ON WOOD BY ROBERT TENNENT

AND ENGRAVED BY STEPHEN MILLER AND GEORGE PEARSON.

LONDON:

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1870.

TO HER
WHO WAS THE COMPANION OF THE WRITER
IN HIS VISIT TO THE FAR EAST
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E.



THE JOURNEY described in the following pages was undertaken from a desire to form some personal acquaintance with a country chiefly known to me through the medium of a close mercantile connection. In a word, business, not bookmaking, was its primary object.

No one, however, who visits our Eastern empire can fail to be forcibly impressed with the novelty of its aspect, and with the strong contrast which it presents to the ordinary routine of European life.

The result of this feeling, in my case, was a series of jottings made on the spot, and designed for the information or entertainment of friends at home; but which, having more recently undergone careful revision, as well as some extension, with reference to later events, are now accorded a wider publicity.

Although the preparation of these memoranda for the press was thus due to an after-thought, and seven years have elapsed since my return home, I have not been unmindful of what has taken place in the interval, and would even indulge the hope that my narrative may be found to have preserved its freshness, and to possess a direct bearing on the existing situation of affairs in British India.

For such information as I have been able to present, apart from my own experience and the statistics gleaned from official documents, I am indebted, not to other volumes of a similar nature, but to the courtesy of friends now or very recently resident in the East, and to the columns of the current Anglo-Indian journals.

It would be vain to expect that the accuracy of the particulars thus acquired should pass wholly unchal-

lenged. I can only assert that I have recorded my own impressions with scrupulous—perhaps prolix—fidelity, and adopted no statement of fact on what I conceived to be loose or insufficient data. At the same time, it has been my desire and endeavour to avoid all expressions calculated to produce in any quarter a just feeling of offence.

If I have ventured to touch upon grave questions affecting the condition and prospects of India, this has been done rather to indicate the importance of such topics than to interfere with their treatment in more competent hands. Indeed, my aim has been simply to afford those who are not conversant with the subject, and who may choose to accompany me through these incidents of travel, a passing glimpse of the social features and material resources of that wonderful Indian continent with which the welfare of our own country is now so intimately associated.

J. M.

GLASGOW: *December*, 1869.

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ENGLAND TO DELHI,

CHAPTER I.

THE GATEWAY OF DEPARTURE.

O Winter, ruler of the inverted year,
 thou hold'st the sun
A prisoner in the yet undawning east.—COWPER.

Before me shone a glorious world,
Fresh as a banner bright unfurled
 To music suddenly.
I looked upon these hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains,
 To live at liberty.—WORDSWORTH.



THE THEORY that the arts of civilization have destroyed the romance of travel is not one of universal application. We Britons, for example, pale-faced inhabitants of a northern latitude, as we shiver under the first attack of winter, are supplied by modern invention with the means of effecting an immediate change in the outward circumstances of our existence. We cannot of course remove the clouds that obscure the sun, or withdraw from the earth its covering of snow ; but, leaving such phases of nature behind us, we can

pass, with what our fathers would have deemed a supernatural speed, into the fields of light that shine below the southern horizon.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the eastward route begun at Marseilles or Brindisi is also bright with the sunshine of social intercourse. On the contrary, the voyager will be more likely to discover himself lost to the world amidst a large but by no means self-denying travelling party. The extent to which this passenger traffic has grown may be illustrated by reference to the last published accounts (June 1869) of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, whose ships still supply the great bulk of what is called the Overland service to the East. From these accounts it appears that the Company's fleet (not including the tugs and transport ships), trading between this country and the ports of India, China, Australia, and Japan, had then reached the extraordinary number of forty-eight large sea-going steamers, aggregating 88,532 tons, customs measurement, and 19,220 horse-power; such being, I imagine, the largest shipping concern the world ever knew.

It were needless to recount the well-known routine of affairs on shipboard between Europe and Alexandria, the more so that I have shown my bias towards an unamiable view of the subject. The steamboat party is usually sufficiently large to form a stirring scene of life, while at the same time it is composed of many heterogeneous elements, high and humble, military, civil, and mercantile; so that, however fancy may gild the picture, it really consists of a shipload of people not at all *en rapport* with one another, but here met in close contact, on common ground, and altogether under circumstances by no means favourable for

the development of the social amenities. Not that good fellowship may not be cultivated on board by those who desire that boon, for warm friendships frequently take root here. But, speaking generally, it may instruct speculative philanthropists to know that the so called sweetly romantic and sadly pathetic spectacle of a handful of human beings cast together on the wide ocean, and journeying for the most part to distant and friendless shores, is by no means a melting scene of mutual sympathy and love ; in short, that in the little world here created the Utopian condition of 'liberty, fraternity, equality,' that shibboleth of revolutionary heroes both at home and abroad, is tried and found wanting.

It may besides benefit the uninitiated, to understand that the rule of experience in such cases is to give assumption, in all its forms, the widest possible berth. There are none who dislike neglect so much as the would-be-great. It involves them in an unhappy sense of failure to begin with, and is sure to elicit, if anything on earth can, their respectful consideration in the end.

At the outset only is the scene brisk and jaunty, as the passengers congregate on deck, attired in fantastic *habits de mer*, exhibiting all the hues of the rainbow, and every vagary of the tailoring art. Then privileged ships' officers, conspicuous with glitter of lace and buttons, mingle expectantly with the throng, canvassing the prospects of a flirtation, or at least searching for smiles and affability where they may chance to be found ; while wandering eyes everywhere ask the great question, 'Who's who ?' The serio-comic interlude that ordinarily ensues is due to the proverbial fickleness of the Mediterranean Sea. On such a cradle, when it *does* swing, the most stirring of human passions

are lulled—the pride of life itself is rocked to rest. No one taking his place in the sick circle pauses to consider the status of a near companion. Nautical-looking gentlemen, whose promenade on deck was, but a moment ago, imposing to behold, now fall into attitudes that evidently are no longer designed for dignity of effect. Great and small, reduced to a common level, meekly consort together, and the wolf lies down with the lamb.



CHAPTER II.

THE THRESHOLD OF THE EAST.

Egypt, thou art no more! thy hour is past!
 Thy solemn symbols and mysterious rites
 Have sunk in fathomless oblivion!—CUTHBERT COLLINGWOOD.

Here at the peep of morning,
 Bedecked with dewy tears,
 Wild weeds her brow adorning,
 Lo! Enterprise appears.—DR. E. D. CLARKE.



CHILDHOOD'S bright fancies and indelible memories have consecrated to most of us the Bible 'Land of Egypt.' We first knew it from the sacred record, as a glorious enchanted realm—a land of dreams, omens, and angels' visits. If it be true, as indeed it is, that not a lingering ray of that spiritual sunshine now remains to Egypt, no one will deny that in the mundane sense at least it is still a scene of wonders. For Egypt, as all the world knows, is a country made up of social anomalies and physical contradictions; it is a land at once rainless and

copiously watered; where poverty crouches among the records

of wealth, and mouldering monuments on desert wastes alternate with living herds and crops on rich alluvial soil.

No wonder, then, that a group of watchers should have occupied the poop, gazing ahead for the first glimpse of Egypt, as the dim outline of Alexandria rose out of the haze in front. As we approached nearer, that celebrated city became revealed as a strange jumble of ancient and modern erections—palaces, pillars, hovels, and earthen mounds—all massed together, without plan or order, on a scorching coast, and forming the foreground of a landscape that receded out of view, seemingly on a dead level with the sea. Such is the gateway of the East; but once within its portals, and surrounded by the elegant buildings styled the ‘Grand Square,’ whither everything that is European tends and finds its location, we contemplate with pleasant surprise a scene which, but for an admixture of swarthy Egyptian coachmen and donkey boys, would precisely resemble the fashionable centre of a continental city. For here, amidst fine shops and handsome equipages, we find a gay concourse of people in European costume.

A sufficient explanation of this animated prospect may be read in the dry figures and prosaic details of commerce, the trade of Egypt with our own and other countries having increased very rapidly of late. This will appear by comparing former statistics with those supplied last year by our English consul at Alexandria, to the effect that, in 1867, upwards of 3,000 vessels of all nations, with a total tonnage of nearly 2,000,000, entered the port of Alexandria; and that the value of the exports in the same year was about 10,000,000*l.*, while the whole imports of the country exceeded 6,000,000*l.* sterling. As showing the increasing resources of Egypt, the revenue for

1854 was estimated at a little over 3,000,000*l.*, and that for 1868 (only fourteen years later) at close upon 7,500,000*l.* sterling. The same attractions of fertility and geographical position, that drew the Macedonian conqueror thither some two thousand years ago, have been influencing less famous, but more honest and peaceable, adventurers in our own times, as the field of industry was gradually laid open by the rulers of the 'land of Egypt.' And thus European wealth and fashion have been growing apace in Alexandria, improving at the same time, as they are everywhere wont to do, in the circumstances, the condition and prospects of a too long neglected and helpless race. This historical city has recently drawn towards itself many of the agencies of modern civilization. Side by side with ancient minarets, tall chimney stacks have risen; steam engines are in active play, and within the spacious harbour the keels of every nation ride securely. When, indeed, the probable results of the Suez canal are considered in connection with the general progress of the country, it would seem that Alexandria is destined to become an African Marseilles, as the natural centre of that vast commerce between the eastern and western parts of the world, the limits of whose further growth none can presume to define. Thus revived into life and activity after many ages of lassitude scarcely broken by the events of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the ancient port of Eunostos, now called Alexandria, bustling with steamers from England, France, Trieste, and Constantinople, besides sailing vessels from all parts of the Western world, already presents a more healthful scene of prosperity than it did in the grandest period of the Ptolemies.

Such, however, is only the foreground of the picture. In the

handsome appearance of the harbour with its ships, and of the Grand Square with its hotels and consulates, we behold but the firstfruits of modern improvement. Beyond this little nucleus of civilization and the well-plenished bazaars, where the native traders congregate, the mass of the population still swarms in dusty dens clustered beside bald, exposed graveyards that overlie the buried remains of Ptolemaic times—the 4,000 palaces, 4,000 baths, 400 theatres, and the ‘many other wonders,’ which Amrou the Conqueror said he ‘could not describe’ in this incomparable ‘city of the West.’ The work of excavating these historical splendours is progressing with moderate success, under the direction of the government, although it would appear they are held by the desert sands in depths that only prolonged toil can render accessible. Of such as had been recovered, at the time of which I speak, few specimens remained on the spot. Cleopatra’s Needles (one of them prostrate) served ingloriously to decorate a waste enclosure adjoining a sculptor’s yard; and Pompey’s pillar, picturesque in its isolation, decorated a barren mound above the common highway. The present year has brought with it a happy calculation and suggestion, to the effect that the fallen Needle, which is the property of the British nation, might be raised and conveyed to England at the trifling cost of 3,000*l.*, to adorn the Thames Embankment, or the Temple Gardens, with an important relic of the old world. Of the famous Catacombs no other traces remain than a few shapeless excavations within a cave situated close to the long breakers of a retired Mediterranean shore; and the most enthusiastic explorers, who enter this classic sand-hole, are not accustomed to prolong their stay.

But the change that has lately occurred in the internal admi-

nistration of Egypt is, of course, an important consideration in the estimate of her progress. The familiar maxim among social economists, 'What one loses another gets,' is especially true when applied to nations; and so out of the devastations of the American war arose that widely extended growth of cotton in Egypt, which constitutes the basis of her new-born prosperity.

When Said Pacha visited England in 1862, the work of reformation had begun, and no one can forget how many and loud were the praises lavished on that Viceroy because of his so-called enlightened views, and the spirit he was said to have infused into the dormant powers of his country. Even clerical bodies, in a mood somewhat broader than their wont, tendered the Prophet's representative in England their humble meed of admiration in addresses commenting on the religious liberty of his rule. But subsequent events proved Said Pacha unworthy of the ovation. With so much fresh glitter on the surface, the fabric of his empire was still the old rotten sepulchre of slavery and oppression within. The industry of the country had been revived by means of forced labour, whereby thousands of poor *fellahs* were constantly being torn from their homes and families by the minions of the government. It turned out also that the state contracts for machinery and utensils were generally given out to favourites of the Viceroy, who did not scruple to take the opportunity of enriching themselves at the public expense.

Under Ismail Pacha, the present ruler, this latter evil at least has been remedied; and should he prove wise enough to relieve the peasantry of those oppressive taxes on land, stores, and

cattle, which have ever been the bane of Egyptian policy, no obstacle will remain to the rapid transformation of the country. Steam ploughs and cotton gins for the land, and steam pumps together with fresh watercourses to expand the slimy overflow of the Nile, have of late years been multiplied with extraordinary rapidity, the Egyptian army itself having literally laid aside the sword for the ploughshare, and assisted to achieve a victory whose fruits are more valuable and enduring than the spoils of war. Cairo and Alexandria are already considerably improved. The railway system, too, has been vigorously developed; and branches from the main lines between Alexandria, Cairo, and Suez, are gradually extending around. When it is added that 'the telegraph is now in operation on all the lines, and connects almost every village of importance in Lower Egypt,' it will be seen that the work in progress involves the reconstruction of the country on a hitherto unknown basis of prosperity.

How strange to think, that all this transformation should have arisen from the simple act of an Italian doctor, who, within the last forty years, planted a handful of cotton seed in a garden near Baalbec?

An overwhelming interest attaches to that vast maritime achievement, regarding the ultimate success of which contradictory opinions still continue to prevail. In any event Europe has realized the fact of an open passage to the Red Sea in spite of all prophecies to the contrary. We know also that this magnificent water channel through the Desert, connecting the seas of the northern and southern zones, although a novelty in these times, is not one in the world's experience. History tells us that such a passage was *attempted* by Pharaoh Necho; but there are evi-

dences of its formation by other rulers both before and after his time. The work in our own day has been prosecuted with a vigour and persistence which the Pharaohs might have desired to emulate, and it may be added by an instrumentality not dissimilar to theirs; for till within the last few years the condition of the wretched subjects of the Pacha, employed under the direction of M. Lesseps, could scarcely be considered superior to that of the Egyptian bondsmen of old.

The imposing character of the opening ceremony with its solemn services and stately splendours, and the actual navigation (although not without some mishaps) of the canal from sea to sea by a large fleet of vessels representing various nationalities, are the theme of to-day. On that memorable occasion Moslem and Christian, meeting face to face on the scene of their ancient strife, united in prayer for the divine blessing on a scheme designed for the welfare of mankind. If the canal should prove sufficient, in the practical sense, for the navigation of such steamers as those of the Peninsular and Oriental and Messagerie Impériale Companies, it can scarcely fail to attract almost immediately the great bulk of the passenger and fine goods traffic. Even if incapable in its present condition we may still hope that the mighty acquisition it offers will not be lost to the world; for, should the necessity arise, civilized Europe would doubtless unite in completing a work calculated to abridge the passage to the East by thousands of miles. Not, however, that the new ocean pathway thus opened up will be all gain to the travelling public; for we learn that the tolls and charges to be levied on a ship of 2,000 tons will amount to about 1,000*l.*, and that the maximum authorized speed is five and a half knots per hour.

By the 'neutrality' of the canal, I presume we are to understand the exclusion of war-ships, and an open passage to the merchant service of all countries.

It is no doubt true, that barriers, hitherto considered insurmountable, still impede the way of human progress in Egypt. National greatness now-a-days can only be built on a healthy condition of the social system, and may be considered impracticable in a country whose ruler is its landlord, and where, above all, woman's part in life is ignored and herself enslaved. That false, miserable arrogance of manhood on the part of the mighty lords of Islam hangs a millstone round the neck of every country they inhabit, and clogs the steps alike of moral and material advancement. The creed of Mahomet is essentially more than a mere profession of faith. It is not the religion of peace but of aggression. The intoxicating delights of Paradise are not for those Mussulmans who, while cherishing their own belief, desire to live at peace with other men. On the contrary, the Koran teaches that the highest exercise of faith is to make war against the unbeliever. It was on this point, indeed, that the far-reaching imagination of the Prophet himself ran wildest. He declared 'the sword' to be 'the key of Paradise and Hell,' and promised the choicest treasures of immortality, including '72 wives of the girls of Paradise, together with 80,000 servants, bearing every day 300 new dishes, and 300 fresh varieties of wine'—not to those who cultivated the arts of industry and the spirit of forbearance, but to those who fought and fell in battle with the Infidel! Yet we also know, that although deeply rooted in the strata of past centuries, and still to some extent cleaving to its native soil, this gigantic growth of human folly and fanaticism has to all appearance begun to wither and decay.

At last, and in our own times, the East and the West, discarding the passions and prejudices of ages, have met and interchanged assurances of friendship. That remarkable alliance, which has scarcely yet passed into European history, was inaugurated at Paris in the summer of 1867, when, among the potentates who visited the French Exhibition and partook of the Emperor's hospitality, appeared the Sultan Abdul Aziz—a very great monarch indeed—not through wealth of state, or strength of armies, but as ruler over 25,000,000 of men, and spiritual chief of 140,000,000 besides, whose lives and worship are regulated by the injunctions of the Koran. The circumstances, apart from prospective results, connected with the Sultan's presence in London now form an attractive page in English story. A peculiar significance undoubtedly belonged to the arrival on our shores of the grand Padishah, ruler of the Ottomans, successor of those Mahomets and Solymans whose policy it had ever been to shun such intercourse, and who were so long the terror and the scourge of Christendom. It was then observed by the 'Times' newspaper, that throughout the four centuries elapsed since the Ottoman conquest, no other Turkish Padishah had crossed the boundary of his own country except in the capacity of an invader, nor had any Christian sovereign beheld the city of Constantinople. Already the latter remarkable statement can hardly be said to hold good, for the Prince and Princess of Wales and the French Empress have very recently seen the spires and paced the mosques of the Turkish capital. But bewildering, even now, to every Mussulman of the old school must be the fact that, had he been in England in July, 1867, his own eyes might have beheld the Turkish ensign streaming in neighbourly proximity to the British flag; or, more mar-

vellous and revolutionary still, the crescent of Islam floating over Buckingham Palace, to celebrate no other victory than the triumph of friendship and good will ! Nor was the expression of that feeling confined even to such emblems as these. The language of the Sultan at Guildhall very amply confirmed their import, and is, I think, worth recalling at this time. 'I have,' said he, 'two objects in view in visiting this and other parts of Europe ; one, to see in these centres of civilization what still remains to be done in my own country to complete the work we have begun ; the other, to show my desire to establish, not only among my own subjects, but between my people and the other nations of Europe, that feeling of brotherhood which is the foundation of human progress and the glory of our age.'

That the Viceroy of Egypt should have appeared on the same occasion, and again, recently, in London, for the purpose of expressing the like views, and of cultivating the friendly intercourse now existing between his country and our own, must be regarded as an incident of great practical value to both. The altered position of His Highness, since the viceregal throne was made hereditary, and the succession vested in his heirs male, may be likened to the conversion of a duke into a king. Bearing now the title, while wielding the actual power of a sovereign, the Khedive lacks no opportunity of completing the work of regeneration already so far advanced. It may even be concluded, that matters have gone too far to recede ; seeing that a network of Western civilization at last holds the country in its meshes. Vacillating, as all national progress must naturally be, ordinary events can scarcely stem the tide that is overflowing Egypt, more richly than the waters of its own Nile, with the elements of internal prosperity. Let Ismail reverse the policy of Mahomed

Ali and stimulate the public industry by removing both from agricultural toil and its produce the heavy burdens imposed upon them ; at the same time let him abolish the obnoxious system of forced labour ; and, with the assistance of Sir Samuel Baker, whom he has worthily called to the task, rid both the Blue Nile and the White of their brutal traffic in slaves ; and Egypt, at length a land of liberty, and capable of feeding a greater empire than Rome, of which it was once the granary, might become, even under his own rule, a fairer dominion than it was in the days of Meroe or Thebes. As matters stand, however, it behoves him to remember his position as ruling with a delegated power ; and to beware of again exciting the jealousy of his suzerain the Sultan, to whom he has just been obliged to render submission.

But the early history of Egypt's greatness is repeating itself in this, that the reputed magnificence of her ancient cities is eclipsed by that of the existing surroundings of the Khedive, who in his new Saracenic palace on the banks of the Nile, the description of which reads like a page of romance, entertains the representatives of all nationalities with more than regal hospitality, the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Empress of the French having been among his recent guests.

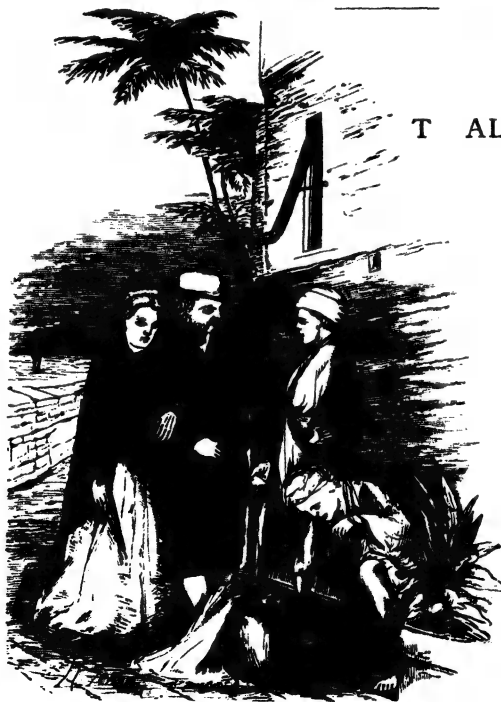
It is still more important to notice, however, that the circumstances attending the presence of these three royal strangers in the streets of Pera and Stamboul are said to have created in the Moslem capital new ideas on marriage and the question of woman's rights. That question, indeed, has now been raised in a very practical form, the Porte having promulgated a system of national education, the most remarkable feature of which is the compulsory instruction of females—a proceeding which of itself warrants the conclusion that a new day is dawning on Islam.

CHAPTER III.

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS.

Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances
Of moving accidents by flood and field.—OTHELLO.

There was a sound of revelrie by night.—BYRON.



AT ALEXANDRIA, as all Indian voyagers know, takes place the confluence of two living streams which flow simultaneously from Southampton and Marseilles, making up the complement of the overland passengers. This 'meeting of the waters' was marked by an adventure which afforded the whole

collected party a practical retrospect of ante-railway days, aggravated by all the extra miseries peculiar to the circum-

stances. The last rising of the Nile had resulted in a great inundation, which carried away a portion of the railway, and the journey to Cairo was continued, first in one frail little steamer along the canal, and thence in another up the Nile to Boulak—in the immediate vicinity of that city—such being the utterly insufficient but only means of conveyance provided by the Egyptian Government in our great emergency. To be cooped up for the space of two days and a night in a crazy craft, shaking and jangling slowly forward against the rapid current of the Nile, was accordingly the exhilarating prospect before us. The bewildering cram and confusion attending the disposal of passengers and luggage, together with all the amiabilities usually attendant on such a scene, which preceded our outset by the canal, were thus prophetic of the ordeal that awaited us on our arrival at the Nile—an event which, by way of complicating the distress of the situation, came to pass sometime about the middle of the night. There, revealed by the star light at a short distance from the landing, in a creek of the sacred stream, lay our Nile boat, not only without steam up, but, to all appearance, entirely deserted. A provoking emblem of Egyptian indifference and apathy this conveyance presented in view of the duty it ought to have been ready to fulfil, mocking the eager impatience of the jostling crowd of passengers who, making frantic haste to land, rushed towards it, full-handed of rugs and bags, all desirous to dispossess one another of such limited accommodation as might be available. The deaf and dumb indifference to all questions of the solitary official—a black beard on his face, a white turban on his head, and a sickly

lamp in his hand,—who at last emerged somewhere out of the gloom, flitting silently about the deck more like a phantom than living form, served effectually to fill up the cup of general indignation and wrath. A loud chorus of complaint arose, in which the baritones of manhood mingled with those ‘low, gentle, and sweet’ notes which have been immortalized as ‘an excellent thing in woman.’ At length the companion-door leading to the cabin having been traced out and discovered to be inhospitably locked, a storming party, improvised by a simultaneous impulse, removed this obstruction in the manner most convenient to the occasion. In other words, the offending door was kicked downstairs, and down after it scrambled the multitude into the dense darkness of the dungeon below. Lights having been with difficulty procured, it was finally arranged that the ladies alone should have the privilege of being immured in this prison-house; the gentlemen betaking themselves aloft, to be cheered by the stars and refreshed with the dews of heaven. But this latter merciful provision of Nature being particularly copious on the night in question, and no protection whatever being provided by the steamboat officials, it soon became an object to get under cover of some kind. As the soaking night wore on, indeed, the situation became intolerable, and a general sprawl ensued, in the course of which sedate figures might be seen coiled cur-like under a long table that traversed a portion of the deck, while dignified arms and legs tossed and wriggled for an asylum within the unaccommodating hollows of the benches on either side. Sheltered below an old dinner-table in an outlying corner, which I was fortunate in finding uninhabited, I was preparing to pass the night in peace, when my privacy was invaded by a roystering

Falstaff in search of rest, a strong weather-proof fellow, whose supper seemed to have given him good heart even in circumstances like these. Unconscious of the ignominious presence of a fellow-creature below, and preferring to stretch himself *en haut*, he flung his huge bulk on the slender board with a boisterous shout of satisfaction, melodiously chanting the cockney version of a Yankee song—

I wish I were with Nancy; I do, I do.

But, alas! the crazy dinner-table resisted this freedom by such audible signs of distress, as proved that it had never before groaned beneath such a load of flesh. The groans, indeed, being soon recognizable as those of impending dissolution, I was fain to beat a precipitate retreat, which had just been safely effected, when a grand crash broke the silence of the night, and the bereaved of Nancy lay writhing on the deck, anathematizing the fragments of his resting-place! Thus warned and instructed, I betook myself to the safer keeping of a chair, and, wrapped in my rug (which gradually became weightier—without, however, becoming warmer—under the influence of the ‘gentle dew’), endeavoured to chase the happy hours away amidst a band of disconsolates similarly situated to myself, who sought relief from their wretchedness in a round of growls against the Egyptian government for providing no better means of conveying them up the Nile.

Had the situation, however, been compatible with a quiet observation of nature, there was a solemn charm in the dream-like picture of the mazy current, traceable like threads of light through the shadowy landscape, its banks fringed with a variety of low shrubbery, including the bulrush of Scripture, and its

depths mirroring a gleaming galaxy of stars. For if the days of miracles are no more even here, heaven continues in this way to shed a brilliant token of its presence on the hallowed waters of the Nile.

In the morning, as the breakfast hour approached, a scene of frolic ensued that ended in downright anarchy. The proceedings naturally enough commenced with a panic on the question of supplies. A couple of perspiring stewards, moving about in a coatless and spasmodic condition, were constantly worried with the expression of fears which they as persistently tried to dispel. But even after they had begun to prepare the long table, assuming as they did so their most complacent and reassuring looks, the apprehension gained ground that, all circumstances considered, there must and would be a deficiency of rations. It was now evident too that some of the younger members of the party considered this a favourable opportunity for the exercise of their pent-up energies. Accordingly, as soon as the viand-bearers emerged from their dens, they were surrounded, and before they could reach the table, despoiled of their edible burdens amidst shouts of laughter. This stage of misrule being reached, the reign of mischief began in earnest. Gentleman housebreakers merrily assailed little cook-shop doors, pushing with might and main against the wild resistance of invisible protectors within. At the same time, amateur burglars, deaf to the protesting shouts of steward and assistants, gleefully ransacked small pantries, flying, each man in turn, with the spoil towards the after-deck, where sat some expectant (shall I dare to suggest *hungry*?) lady-love, for whom he had just shown that, like the village landlord for Sterne's poor Lieutenant, he could '*almost* steal.'

At length, however, the spirit of propriety, which had fled in terror at the alarming forebodings of hunger, returned and resumed its sway, enabling us to look forth undistractedly on the extraordinary panorama of field and flood, through which our little steamer was slowly tracing her course. The vast level expanse of country visible around was covered with wide lakes and long tracts of water receding to the horizon. In this transient sea we beheld the residue of the still subsiding flood. It was everywhere interspersed with trees, standing either in solitary isolation, or in clumps, and among which the tall tufted palm was conspicuous, together with the beautiful weeping willow peculiar to that region, and an acacia with bright yellow flowers.

The windings of the overflown river itself could be traced not only by the course of the fine foliage that fringed its banks, but more clearly by that of the numerous lateen boats which, laden with the produce of the country, traversed it in every direction, steering their way from village to village, among palms and sycamores, the sunlight gleaming on their graceful wing-like sails. Enlivening the glowing picture, flocks of white 'paddy' birds and other feathered tribes hovered by the banks or skimmed the shining waste of waters. It was pitiful to think, however, that this peaceful and lovely spectacle was but a mask of woe—the garniture of a teeming necropolis. Here, with an aspect of beauty, and steeped in sunshine, was in reality a sadly suggestive scene of famine, misery, and death. Beneath the flood lay blighted fields of corn and cotton, and submerged homes of the poor.

Thus the destruction of a portion of the railway, the evil

in which we unfortunate voyagers were concerned, was not the only or chief calamity that had arisen from the great inundation now subsiding around us. It was understood that no fewer than a thousand villages had been engulfed in the flow of waters, with inhabitants too numerous for accurate computation in a country where human life is so lightly valued. Yet what are the details of a fact so simply told but a romance of horror which would have been celebrated over the earth by vivid tongues and pens had the scene been set in a populated district of Europe, or perhaps anywhere but in Egypt?

Of the numerous little towns and hamlets which we passed by the way, it may be sufficient to remark that they were extremely rude and heterogeneous in their construction, some of the buildings exhibiting such architectural taste and elegance as may be conceded to mere mounds of earth in which man and beast are wont to dwell together in reciprocal contentment and familiarity, jostling one another in the narrow entrance as they pass out and in. I may here recall an amusing, though not uncommon, example of this homely association of the races.

As we drew near one of these strange habitations, we observed its low roof decorated with an extraordinary ornament, as if it had fructified with the flood and shot forth a couple of long brown leaves, erect and of perfect symmetry. On nearer inspection these twin excrescences turned out to be the great ears of a donkey, whose placid face was dimly visible through the opening made in the roof for his convenience, and who thus stood revealed as having found accommodation for himself in the family mansion—all but the ears!



MOSQUE OF MAHOMED ALI, CITADEL, CAIRO.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOUNDS AND SIGHTS OF CAIRO.

'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
To peep at such a world ; to see the stir
Of the great Babel.—COWPER.

Dusk faces, with white silken turbans wreath'd.—MILTON.

I am an ass indeed ; you may prove it by my long ears. I have served man from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my services but blows.—*Comedy of Errors*.



HOSE who desire to witness a thoroughly Eastern city need scarcely go further than Cairo, with its excellent native or Turkish bazaar, its Frank bazaar, and its motley crowd of denizens. The visitor is usually recommended to begin his inspection by repairing to the citadel, situated on a level height of about 250 feet above the city, and further attractive as the site of the Great Mosque, which, as every one who has entered it knows, presents a magnificent interior, the effect of which is materially vulgarized by the range of coarse, gaudy windows that admit the 'dim religious light' which fills the enormous chamber.

The view from this elevation of the great city spread out below, and of the surrounding country, is such as can only be

partially realized from the photographic pictures of it now everywhere current. Inverting the ordinary rule of comparison, photography cannot adequately depict the lifeless and petrified aspect of Cairo as witnessed from this spot—a far stretch of



TOMBS OF THE CALIPHS.

miserable habitations densely massed together, intermingled with lordly mansions, marble courts, and garden walks—the whole surmounted by an extraordinary but highly picturesque array of Saracenic domes and towers. But the deserted aspect of the city, and the fiery sunshine which then illumined its miles



CAIRO.

of brick and stone, were suggestive of a place where all life had withered through excess of light and heat. Thus the tombs of the caliphs, conspicuous in the midst, here formed an appropriate scene in the picture of Cairo, inasmuch as their ghostly tenants were not better hidden from the eye than the other inhabitants of the place. For, with the exception of a few figures, moving in a square below, not a soul was visible of all the two hundred thousand that live and move with infinite noise and demonstration in the Egyptian capital.

But hark! the ear if not the eye is cognizant of that great stir of life. A weird sound floats up to the citadel, diffused and commingled like the voice of many waters, from the loud bawling multitude hidden beneath the sun's blaze in what seems a city of the dead! This, I confess, is all I can say in favour of a spectacle so often vaunted as one of great natural beauty and magnificence. It is true that beyond the city, on the right, lay a pleasant prospect of low level land with fields and trees dwarfed in the distance, among which the Nile, varied at intervals with a lateen sail or a steamer's smoke, wound its devious course, sparkling like a line of light. On the other side, however, nothing met the eye but a far expanse of desert, in which appeared the Pyramids looking anything but large or wonderful. That this glowing, rainless land nevertheless bore plants and flowers beyond the overflow of the Nile, was a fact as apparent as that of its sterility. Below where we stood, and in full view, lay the fine garden pertaining to a nobleman's house; but even the high prison-like wall with which it was surrounded could not protect it from the hot drifting sand that speckled its green luxuriance, and rested in suffocating heaps on every leaf and stem.

I have no desire to dwell on so trite a subject as an excursion to the Pyramids; and in dismissing them with our departure from the citadel, will only state as the result of my own experience, that, insignificant in size and close at hand as they appear, nothing less than a good day's journey, spent in going and returning, will serve to make any one thoroughly acquainted with the nearest; and that this ordeal, duly fulfilled, consists of three separate acts. First: the act of reaching the Pyramid by oscillating insecurely for some hours in the sun on the back of a donkey, that being an exercise to which skill in horsemanship, properly so called, lends neither ease nor facility. Second: the act of ascending the Pyramid in high, strained steps, directed from stone to stone; only rendered possible by means of the helping hands of a couple of semi-savage attendants, whose limbs are all the more elastic that they are not clogged with drapery; and, lastly, the act of penetrating the interior of the Pyramid under the guidance of the same elegant pair, who, jabbering without intermission, sometimes direct, sometimes drag their victim up steep inclines, and through a labyrinth of stone passages, rough, tortuous, low and narrow, to a large black vault in the heart of the pile, where the peep of the two candles, which had served thus far to reveal the *via dolorosa*, barely suffices to make the darkness visible.

Such is the ordeal implied in what I have heard called 'doing the Pyramids,' a series of undertakings which the language of experience (in this matter strangely inconsistent) pretty equally denounces as a needless affliction, and extols as a gratification that should not be lost.

It has been reserved for a few ingenious theorists of these days to invest the Great Pyramid with a new and extraordinary

signification, which, if true, would render a visit to it infinitely more attractive. The world of historical and mathematical knowledge, however, will scarcely be startled into any serious consideration of reasonings, to the effect that the building dates from the days of Noah, and was constructed under Divine guidance as the shrine of certain great fundamental truths, intended for the instruction of all time—the base of the pyramid, for example, being an ‘inspired measure of length,’ and the central chamber a similarly inspired measure of ‘capacity;’ while other peculiarities indicate not only the earth’s size, weight, and period of revolution round the sun, but the *precise* distance (acknowledged by astronomers to be not yet accurately ascertained) of the luminary itself! By what process of pyramidal investigation this last item is brought out at 92,093,000 miles it will be difficult for the uninitiated to comprehend; nor does the assumed accuracy of the figures derive much strength from the fact adduced in its favour—that the most recent computation of astronomical science shows a near approximation to the sum mentioned.

We read that in the days of Herodotus, wise men announced the sun to be about ten miles away (giving it the dimensions of a large balloon), and that Anaxagoras, who considered it a much larger body, only extended his estimate to the comparatively enormous distance of 18,000 miles, at the same time magnifying the luminary’s bulk to the size of the Peloponnesus. It would indeed be a wonderful conclusion that, before Copernicus and Galileo arose to dispel the delusions of the old world, the Great Pyramid might have instructed mankind on the subject

with an accuracy which the science of astronomy has yet failed to acquire!

Descending to the principal thoroughfares of the city, we are at once within the pale of Eastern life, for the native characteristics are all here in great variety and thorough conservation. In narrow dusty streets, formed of high rickety buildings, many of them constructed of wood, and partially shut in from the sun by awnings of patchwork laid across the top, a motley gathering of human beings and beasts of burden, confusedly mingled together, move through the alternate sunshine and shadow. Among other living figures the proud-stalking camel and the meek-trudging donkey are conspicuous, laden with commodities or humanity, as the case may be, and jostling for right of way with various shades and gradations of mankind, from the yellow-faced Turk with his silk turban and Morocco slippers down to the sable Nubian, whose raiment barely redeems him from the charge of having none. To imagine such a grotesque multitude, surging along amidst a great flourish of whips and staves, accompanied with frantic shouts and gesticulations, is to form some idea of the principal street in Cairo at the noontide hour. Through every available passage in the crowd rushes the ubiquitous donkey, with a pair of human legs, clad or unclad, native or foreign, dangling at his pinched sides, and fleetly followed by a juvenile tormenter with a stick. The shops are well stored with products both of the East and West, although seldom remarkable for the bustle which prevails outside. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the appearance of some of their owners, each seated with lack-lustre expression, smoking his *chibouk* as he looks forth upon the hubbub with

an air of the most ludicrous composure; an air, indeed, not at all dissimilar to that with which oxen chewing their cud contemplate with great placid eyes the still prospect of their pasture field.

Amidst this gathering of the quick the dead also are represented, in appearance at least, by the better class of women,



CAIRO LADY.

who glide silently through the dust, shrouded from head to foot in the similitude of grave-clothes, with only an aperture for the eyes. Nor does the actual presence of death in the public ways diminish in any degree the din of their traffic, for grief, like every other emotion, is demonstrative in Egypt, and the lamenting shouts of bereaved mourners at a funeral are raised as a nobler manifestation of sorrow than mere sighs and tears.

No one can mingle with the native crowds of Cairo without discovering the ravages of ophthalmia in the excessive number of persons who are either blind or to some extent afflicted with sore eyes. So much for the fine dry climate of Egypt, its open sky, wealth of sunshine, and immunity from provoking clouds and rain ! To such a climate too is due the irrepressible 'plague of flies,' a plague which affects all comers, and seems to be as reliable as the weather itself. The winged legions are notably strong in Cairo, within doors attacking simultaneously the viands on every table and the hands and faces of those who sit down to eat, while outside they gather in dark clusters under the bright eyes of children, where they appear to find dainty fare—a loathsome group of parasites, returning to the attack if they are driven a thousand times away, and tolerated at last because they have vanquished the carelessness and irresolution of the young.

But of course the picture of Cairo, like that of other cities of the kind, has its more open and agreeable background, and of this the principal feature is the Esbekayah—a place of public promenade, which may be shortly described as a dusty little *Champs Elysées*. Here a lively and entertaining spectacle presents itself. The place is studded with refreshment booths, in which liquor and ices are served, as well as with orchestral platforms, whence nondescript bands of musicians radiate loud music to delighted audiences seated on benches around. The variety of instruments, too, is not less notable than that of the players themselves, who are composed of men of all nations among the many represented in Cairo. As the chief hotels are situated in this neighbourhood, English visitors here mingle with the

concourse of Cairo fashionables—Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Nubians, Italians, and Jews—who, arrayed in lofty turban, scarlet *fez*, or jaunty wide-awake, and associated with feminine companions bedizened with excess of tinsel and gay ribbons, promenaded the dusty footpaths, or occupied chairs and benches under the shadow of the trees, doubly regaling themselves with the hospitalities of the booths and the melodies of the players. The heterogeneous constitution of these performing companies was perhaps the most amusing feature of the scene. One of them in particular, as it appeared in spasmodic action within its proper enclosure, attracted our attention as furnishing an imposing variety of race and costume. A Greek with red *fez* sounded the trumpet, while another beat the drum; a brown bright-eyed Italian thrummed the harp; a dolorous yellow face, frowning beneath a huge white turban, presided at the triangle; the cymbals clashed in hands that could be traced to no origin in particular, and the flute was furiously whiffed by a little hunchbacked Nubian as black as ebony! Whatever may be the status of Cairo in the musical world, the production of noise rather than melody was plainly the aim of this strange brotherhood of *artistes*. Yet, what alternative was theirs, seeing that the close proximity of other similar troupes, rioting in the like active play, rendered a tremendous effort to obtain a hearing essential to being heard at all?

Far better music, however, may be enjoyed in the dusk of the evening at the hotel doors, whither youthful Italian wanderers, coming from Trieste, repair, with harp and accordion, to sing the peerless strains of their native land.

CHAPTER V.

LIFE IN DEATH.

In the desert a fountain is springing.—BYRON.

And o'er the sand, and o'er the sand,
And round the sand, and round the sand,
As far as eye could see.—REV. CHAS. KINGSLEY.



ORDINARY notions of a city's gates and the green champaign beyond are very strikingly reversed in the case of Cairo, whence the eastward traveller steps out at once into the wilderness. Even from the outset of that unparalleled railway journey nothing is visible but a territory of sand blending with the sky at the horizon, and there forming shadowy pictures of islands with trees and hills. Through this sunlit land of desolation passengers are whirled at fair railway speed, free, as they view the lifeless scene around them, to speculate on the freaks and mysteries of nature; and naturally feeling their own existence an anomaly in such a universe of death. The means of prolonging human life, however, are abundantly provided at the

several stations by the way, wherein viands and attendants, shut in by thick walls from the glowing waste around, are maintained in a state of preservation. The train having stopped a short time at one of these, we availed ourselves of the opportunity to take a stroll in the desert, using our umbrellas as a shade. A dreary saunter it was, the monotony of which only the very acquisitive could partially relieve by picking up samples of the brittle shells with which the sand was strewn, or in selecting fragmentary specimens from among the broken anatomies of perished birds and camels that were scattered around, forming in the absence of plants and flowers a kind of natural decoration of the soil. It should be borne in mind that the desert does not present a level surface, but a tract of hills and valleys of sand, these being all fleeting and restless as the wind that creates them. Nothing can be more picturesque than the occasional example it affords of the only other mode of traffic, besides the iron locomotive, which is yet known throughout its solitudes—a line of camels and their attendants, far distant perhaps in the bright landscape, slowly moving, no doubt, but seemingly as still as the Sphinx, and looking like sculptured figures on the sand. Occasionally, near the railway line, appears an Arab dwelling or two—these being nothing more than little smoky dens formed of baked earth, and covered in at the top with branches. Within dwell men, women, and children, together with fowls and donkeys, with what purpose in life it seems difficult to divine; but their existence in such a spot, together with that of certain clumps of an unwholesome green weed, blooming at distant intervals on the waste, may be

regarded as the only examples of vegetation pertaining to a place apparently incapable of sustaining organic life.

As we approached Suez, however, we became conscious of the existence of animal energy even here, by the appearance of several fleet gazelles, nimbly engaged in the unnecessary act of increasing the already ample distance between them and ourselves.

The miserable place called Suez possesses the foreign element of a splendid hotel, which may indeed be regarded as a luxuriant oasis in the surrounding desert ; and here the crowd of travellers regale themselves with rest and refreshment ere they go forth to swell the *mêlée* outside, which in these parts must needs signalize so great an embarkation as that of the Bombay, Calcutta, and China passengers at once. We were conveyed in small steamers on board our several stately ships lying at anchor well out in the Gulf of Suez, that operation being effected amidst endless heaps of luggage, a hubbub of squalling children, and quite a profusion of adult crusty tempers, roused into unwonted activity by the roasting heat of the day and the general confusion of the scene.



CHAPTER VI.

A FIERY CHANNEL AND A BURNING ROCK.

And strange and sad the whispering surges bore
The groans of Egypt to Arabia's shore.—HEBER.

Sits the wind in that corner?—*Much Ado about Nothing.*

So have I heard on Afric's burning shore
A hungry lion give a grievous roar.—T. B. RHODES.



So the Red Sea stands in the map, it has the appearance of a narrow line of water, but extending at its greatest breadth in reality to 192 miles, it assumes at certain stages of the passage the aspect of a wide ocean with no land in sight—a stormy ocean sometimes, in which high winds and

waves combine to aggravate the difficulties of navigating its numerous coral reefs—a fiery sea always, whether sleeping

or surging in its deep bed between the elevated territories of Egypt, Nubia, and Abyssinia on the one hand, and the high table-land of Arabia on the other; and studded, in addition to these dangerous coral reefs, with numerous little islands, chiefly of volcanic origin, some of which emit smoke and flame from time to time, in harmony with the climatic character of the place. The general appearance of the coast may be shortly described as a solitary belt of sand, ending in a range of high barren hills stretching peak behind peak into the hazy distance. This scene of desolation was then strongly illumined by a hot colourless sky, only relieved by a few thin white clouds, and such was the situation in which a compact sweltering multitude, of more than 300 persons, including passengers and crew, bound for Bombay, were open to look around them, and to make merry for the space of six days during the passage of the Red Sea.

The long blank shore-line is known to be tenanted only by a few wandering Arabs, from whose hands, it is said, no helpless living creature would be likely to escape with life. Are we, therefore, to conclude that, in such a region, parched, sun-blasted, and dead to the softer processes of nature, the effect of combined heat and sterility on the human heart is to dry up its juices, and make it sterile too?

Students of Bible history are aware that the locality generally associated with the passage of the children of Israel across the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army is within a few miles of Suez. Passing down the gulf, the well-known village of Torr appears on the left. It consists only of a few huts among some date-trees, but is known as a place of debarkation

for visitors to the supposed Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai, the peaks of which, we were informed, are sometimes visible from the sea. We were now contemplating a landscape of bare conical hills, some of considerable height, undulating away, one behind the other, until they melted out of view. Surveying this picture we could well realize the horrors of the situation in the long succession of hot, rainless valleys among these mountains of rock, constituting that wilderness of Sinai where the children of Israel wandered for forty years. The outline of what is popularly considered the sacred mountain itself was pointed out to us—with what accuracy I know not—looming high in the far prospect, and looking as if the ‘thunders and lightnings’ of the sacred record, and the glory that once ‘shone upon Mount Sinai,’ had blasted it into the rugged crag we beheld.

Further down, the steamer stopped at Ushruffee, a promontory on which the lighthouse it now possesses was then in course of erection, the little wooden dwellings of the workmen, thirty-five in number, being visible on an adjacent island or rock. Here the engineer of the works, conveyed in a rowing boat by two of his men, came on board the steamer, and begged for a couple of sheep by way of food for these solitary inhabitants of a spot which yielded none, and the animals were duly handed over the ship’s side into the boat. Among our passengers was a good bishop of the English Church, who, observing his opportunity, came up hastily from his cabin, and threw a packet of papers over the ship’s side to the men in the boat just as they were pushing off. It fell into the water, but was speedily rescued by the boatmen, who respectfully

saluted the donor, apparently grateful for the gift, and quite aware of its character—a bundle of religious tracts. And so, as we steamed away, our visitors slowly pulled back to their bright but cheerless home, laden with a supply of food both for the body and the soul.

At Jubal, now a telegraphic station of the Red Sea, we were also ‘boarded,’ and this time by a young Englishman in a small sailing-boat. He came to advise us of something wrong in the working of the line, and at once returned to his place of exile, indicated by the appearance of four or five wooden huts perched on an adjacent rock, where, without water to drink that was not brought from a distance, and without a blade of grass to refresh the eye, his fellow-unfortunates awaited him, broiling in the sun.

The slow process of navigation through this hotbed of nature has for some years past been a subject of serious complaint, and not without reason. When it is considered that the Cunard and Inman steamers have long been traversing the Atlantic Ocean at a speed of fourteen or fifteen miles an hour, while those of the Peninsular and Oriental Company continue to meander through the furnace of the Red Sea at the rate of nine or ten, there appears, after making every proper allowance for the effects of climate, to be some room for complaint. Not that any blame attaches to the enterprising concern last named, since, during the currency of their former contract (ended in November, 1867), their means and powers were exerted to the utmost, with an unremunerative result. Now, however, that a new arrangement has been effected, involving a larger subsidy to them, together with higher requirements on the part of our Government

in respect of speed and general efficiency, we may probably look forward to a service more commensurate with the needs of frail humanity, and the nautical achievements of the time.

The fleet of fine steamships belonging to the Peninsular and Oriental Company, together with those of the French Messagerie Impériale line, now connecting Suez with the far East by weekly arrivals and departures, constitutes, though no other sail existed, a mercantile marine far beyond that which prevailed here in ancient times ; nor can we doubt that it will continue to expand year by year. For great are the prospects of commercial intercourse with the East, while for the purposes of the present generation, the face of the earth does not reveal any more convenient way of communication than that afforded by the Red Sea, however desirable a change may be considered by shiploads of perspiring voyagers. Nor is the mechanical prospect of relief greatly more cheering than the geographical. Though much certainly remains to be done as regards swifter progress, it must be remembered that the propelling power of a steamship becomes diminished in a hot climate by reason of the slower process of condensation. Seeing, therefore, that we cannot control the weather, nothing remains but to counteract its influence as far as possible on shipboard, by cultivating those admirable devices which already provide us with tolerably cold water and *champagne frappé* even in the Red Sea.

Allusion to the weather reminds me of that which, although of the school-book order of studies, now first meets the observation of the inexperienced English voyager. Having witnessed the marvel of a rainless land of plenty, and traversed a great wilderness in a railway carriage, he is now invited to contem-

plate a grander novelty than either—the action of the meteorological laws in the wider fields of their operation. Weather-wisdom, so complicated a study in the English Channel, scarcely rises to the dignity of a science in the Red Sea, which from its peculiar territorial position is swept by the winds mainly in the direction of its length; the S.S.E. prevailing with varying strength from October till May or June, and the N.N.W. from June till October.

Thus the traveller to the far East may, even at this early stage of his journey, mark that play of the great machinery of nature whose movements in our northern island are so disturbed by conflicting influences. He has been tending towards a wider and more central portion of the globe, where monsoons, fed on desert wastes, blow in ascertained directions for known periods; and where trade winds, born of intertropical heat, circulate in the service of mankind with the order and regularity of the sun. For a while at least he seems to live in a new world, where nearly all the year through a blazing sun continuously, day by day, overspreads the face of nature with vivid light; where the clouds drop rain at and through intervals of time that may be unerringly foretold; and where white folks, in light costume, wait in shady verandahs for the land or the sea breeze, which, like a spirit of health, comes to them at the expected time with heaven-appointed regularity.

Such angels' visits constitute the sole natural blessing of Aden—volcanic rock, military station, coal depôt, and rendezvous of dishevelled figures from either coast gathered together for purposes of trade, beggary, or plunder. Aden, as seen from the ship, consists only of a few houses straggling along the shore-line,

and crowning the summit of the rock ; its most prominent erection in fact being the black mass of coal piled up as a supply for the steamers. The scene is hard, dry, and dead, as a portion of the fossil world.

We landed at an early hour of the morning accompanied by our captain, who politely conveyed us to the house of a friend, where we were hospitably entertained at breakfast. Our visit, however, was not accomplished in peace, as might have been expected from the desolate character of the place ; for although human life is preeminently artificial here, it is very far from inactive. Steering through the native boatmen who flocked about the steamer clamorous for a fare, and a number of amphibious boys who surrounded us ere we reached the shore, diving for and bringing up the smallest coin of the many that were thrown for that purpose into the sea, we encountered an indescribable assemblage of individuals, chiefly of Nubian and Arabian origin, awaiting our arrival on *terra firma*. Some of these figures, professing the office of guides, shouted their willingness to conduct us to the hotel ; some, determined to accommodate us as porters, actually essayed to lay hands on anything we happened to carry ; while another set, flourishing improvised whips, as the symbols of their calling, proclaimed in loud chorus that they had buggies in attendance, ready to convey us where we chose. There, indeed, in a row before us, stood a number of these lofty vehicles in a condition quite as beggarly and untrustworthy as their owners ; the one into which we were specially invited to clamber being manifestly in peril of losing either of its two great wheels in the course of a few turns. It was amusing to notice, that among those of our fellow-passengers whom experience had made familiar

with this troublesome ordeal, not a few were prepared to deal with it in a summary fashion, being armed with canes in order to whack the spindle legs and rap the bony fingers of the too officious and importunate; a design which was put in force much too freely, as it seemed to me, but certainly with the effect of vastly increasing the general tumult and confusion.

On board ship, on shore, and at the hotel, wild-looking creatures appeared, offering for sale ostrich eggs and feathers, which may be considered the proper merchandise of Aden. Some of these men, belonging to the Somali tribe, were adorned with dyed wigs exactly resembling a boat's mop, and others with high conical hats of plaited straw; the charm of their presence being enhanced by the additional ornament of long, unkempt locks, which might or might not have been their own, hanging in tangled masses down the neck and face. The price they asked for their wares, in the hope of fleecing a stray simpleton, bore no reasonable affinity to that which they were willing to accept; and this attempt to cheat, when practised with any degree of persistence on the experienced buyer, was met by an expedient altogether unknown among the recognized observances of trade — that, namely, of snatching the property out of the vendor's hands, and retaining it until he chose to allow the element of reason to enter into the negotiation. On several such occasions it was affecting to behold the contortions of the face beneath the mop or cone of straw. One tall fellow, from whose too unwary fingers an irascible 'old Indian' had plucked the feathers he had attempted to overvalue ridiculously, immediately and without a word of remonstrance threw back his head, and, opening his mouth to the widest, bawled with stentorian lungs

precisely after the manner of a whipped child. And this performance might have succeeded in its object of moving the bystanders to pity, but for the suspicious peculiarities attending it of tearless eyes, and an occasional thoughtless collapse of the whole facial deformity.

At the distance of about three miles round the shore and in the heart of the rock is its little capital city, called 'the Cantonments'—the focus of life in Aden. Here we found the dwellings of the military residents, who constitute of course the principal society of the place, together with a range of shops, some of them exhibiting a supply of delicious fruits from the Arabian coast, and quite a stirring assemblage of natives in a variety of nondescript costumes, together with British soldiers in scarlet uniform.

Here also, in an exotic corner, our eyes were refreshed with the vision of a miniature garden of flowers, decorated with a bright green plant in the centre, the whole plot in fine bloom. The elements of productive nature had been brought to the uncongenial rock, and there fostered into life and beauty in spite of the consuming sun, the soil being watered every few hours.

The 'tanks' that preserve the precious rain-water may be regarded as the grand treasury of Aden, besides being, as an architectural achievement, its chief work of art. In such a region it is pleasant even for strangers to look down into their pellucid depths, but a resident may well do so with something of that stronger feeling with which a miser contemplates his hoard of gold.

Who that has witnessed this incomparable anomaly of an active human community on a broiling rock could have imagined

that by any chance it would be suddenly eclipsed by an invasion on a much larger scale of the equally burning and barren African coast directly opposite? Yet such was the landing of the Abyssinian expedition with its motley crowd of followers—Hindoos, Egyptians, Persians, Arabs, and Chinese—together with thousands of beasts of burden, transport waggons, and all the requisite accompaniments of warfare in circumstances so arduous and strange; a landing only rendered possible by such instrumentality as a stone pier, stretching 200 yards into the sea at one end, and connected at the other by a tramway leading some distance inland. A marvellous ‘turn-up’ indeed on that isolated and inhospitable shore! Never before were the fiery solitudes of the flat beach and the ‘twelve miles of level ground covered with brushwood’ intervening between Annesley Bay and the high mountains which wall in Abyssinia, pervaded by such a vivid stir of life as that of which they were recently the theatre. Never before did these rugged blue cliffs look down on such a scene. History records that the town of Zoulah, the rendezvous of our forces a few miles inland, although scarcely heard of in modern times, was known to and visited by Egyptian mariners in the days of the Pharaohs. But its bewildered inhabitants heard a new and startling war-cry in the shriek of the railway locomotive, steaming along with the stores and all the paraphernalia of an invading force, which, whether as regards the variety of its elements, the stir of its progress, or the extent of its appliances, was unparalleled in the history of invasion. Swift and effectual in its mission—come and gone in a few months—

that grand *tableau* only appeared on the shores of the Red Sea to fade from them like a dissolving view.

If there be a native bard such as Ossian dwelling among the mountains of Abyssinia, he may have sung of the event as a fiery thunder-cloud, which, coming in by sea from the direction of Bombay, crept up the ravines from the coast, and burst with destructive power on the fortified slopes of Magdala !



CHAPTER VII.

A SHIP AT SEA.

I am Power, I am Might, I am Steam.

On the far distant seas, through the storm and the spray,
Unflinching, swift-darting, I speed on my way,
With a pulse that ne'er stops, and with fins that ne'er tire.
A Leviathan filled with a soul that is Fire!
Wind and tide strive in vain; I cleave sternly as Death,
Through the tempest above and the wild waves beneath;
And the long-trailing smoke floats away o'er the main
As I lash the dark waters to foam in disdain.—THOMAS HOOD.

But now I am cabin'd, cribbed, confin'd.—*Macbeth*.



THE voyage from Aden to Bombay usually occupies a week, and the breezes of the Arabian Sea, though naturally warm and enervating, now bring with them a pleasant sense of relief. It may be worthy of note that, throughout the eastern portion of the route to India, beginning at Suez, the change of life on board ship is by no means so thorough as that of the climate and its concomitants. Human nature, as represented by an English nautical party, does not at once succumb to the power of those physical laws whose province has been invaded True, the

outward aspect of things on deck is changed as much as are the elements themselves. A swarthy, barefooted crew of Lascars, Chinamen, Hindoos, and other Easterns, in easy but varied habiliments, only relieved by a sparse sprinkling of British tars in white ducks, now man the ship, cook the passengers' victuals, and, as often as they themselves eat, sit near the galley, cross-legged, in a circle, round a cauldron of rice, using their fingers as a spoon. This group is of itself a novelty congenial to the climate, belonging to it as exclusively as do the large, brown, swift-running cockroaches that now infest the cabins, intent on stealing a midnight supper, not of the Lascars' rice, but of human flesh and blood, daintily selected from beneath the nail of the great toe!

Captain, officers, and passengers, too, all appear arrayed in those airy garments—thin, wide, and flapping—with which every man provides himself before leaving home, as he would a life-preserver in the prospect of another kind of danger. It being understood that the back of the head must be specially guarded from the sun, gentlemen turn out with a variously mounted flow of drapery depending from thickly lined hats of straw. Some are martial in appearance, with sun hats shaped exactly like Roman helmets. All are effeminate so far as regards the appendage of a blue or green veil. But oh! for a photograph of the early morning, ante-breakfast group—the experience-taught, health-cultivating voyagers who come up one by one, gliding ghostlike from the depths below in the semi-darkness, ere the sun has risen, to parade the deck for a cool, pleasant hour, while the sailors are flooding it with sea water, and then to wait their turn at the salt-water baths, with which the ship is always furnished,

before returning to their respective dens to dress for the morning meal—to dress, because of the urgent necessity existing for that excellent conventional habit in a case like theirs, where the better to enjoy the morning air, loose *payjamas* are rolled far above the knee, and the sleeves of flannel shirts are tucked high over the elbow, while an open neck and uncovered shock head appropriately crown the spectacle!

It must be admitted, however, that this is not only an agreeable refreshment, but a particularly useful regimen in circumstances so destructive, both of mental and physical vitality, as those of a tropical voyage. It is meet, no doubt, that such a motley gathering should disperse before the advent of the ladies, which indeed it does, fleetly decamping, with amusing hurry-scurry, on any symptom of a surprise.

The interval between breakfast and dinner is naturally felt to be the most tedious of the day, being the longest and hottest. By turns to move languidly about the ship, regaled, in the act of going forward, with a variety of unpleasant odours—to loll in an easy chair (every person does or ought to provide one for himself) under the awning on the after-deck, engaging the mind, whether by reading or conversation, with subjects that will not strain its powers—or each man recumbent in his berth, to kill time with a book, when it happens that the air-hole called a window can be opened, such are the ordinary sources of enjoyment pertaining to the situation.

In circumstances like these the sound of the dinner bell is naturally heard with that overpowering emotion expressed in the homely stanza :—

Sweet is the tinkling Sabbath bell,
As to the church we throng ;
But sweeter even to Mess John,
Is the booming dinner gong.

And more particularly is the call a cheerful one, when, according to custom in some ships, it is sounded musically by a portion of the band. In one steamer, especially, I remember that the meal hours were heralded always within three minutes of the proper time, by the apparition of two demure old tars standing close, motionless, and erect at a certain spot near the cabin stairs, and furnished with fife and drum, which, after the manner of the mechanical figures over the Place St. Mark at Venice, they instantly commenced to ply when the clock sounded the hour. Each appearance of to-day was in ludicrous conformity with that of yesterday, as was also each performance, the breakfast or tea summons being vigorously whiffed and beat out to the tune of 'Polly put the Kettle on,' and that of dinner to the air of the 'Roast Beef of Old England.'

Yet, notwithstanding the jolly character of this invitation to eat, the occasion is not 'appetizing.' Besides the absence of sharpening climatic influences, the palate encounters much that is distasteful on shipboard in a tropical climate. Such viands as fowl and flesh, for example, require to be consumed while perfectly fresh, and must therefore accompany those who intend to eat them in the vital condition of fellow-voyagers. And so it comes about that, while one supply is being discussed at the dinner-table below, another may be heard aloft crowing, quacking, and bleating, as if in a chorus of protest. Of course these comforts on board ship, such as they are, imply a complete immunity from sea-sickness. In other words, they are only to be enjoyed

(so far as most people are concerned) 'wind and weather permitting.' Wind and weather *not* permitting, the situation simply ceases to exist, if the fact that the company disappears be a sufficient proof of the assertion. Then social life dies, and individual existence, cherished for the most part in close sleeping berths, becomes a kind of stewy consciousness of being, in which the mind is alive to little else than the tardy course of time.

Happily, however, this state of things is usually no more than an episode in the routine of the voyage, and, as I have already remarked, the force of our national habits and energies asserts itself through all the ordinary depressing effects of a tropical sail. The monotony is occasionally relieved by a theatrical performance, or a pseudo-negro musical entertainment, in which stewards and passengers are banded together for the nonce as boon-cronies; these displays being frequently arranged and enacted in a style that would not discredit the members of either profession.

A dance too is sometimes got up, in the cool of the evening, to the music of the ship's own band, affording that opportunity for a little flirtation which is denied by the light and the languor of the day. Nor is the situation unsuited to this species of entertainment, for besides the attraction of so many youthful cavaliers of the military and civil service on their way to Indian quarters, the naval element is adroitly and even gaily represented in the circle by young officers of the ship in their ordinary uniform.

CHAPTER VIII.

OTHER WORLDS.

Star unto star speaks light, and world to world
Repeats the password of the universe.—*Festus.*

And happy constellations on that hour
Shed their selectest influence.—*Paradise Lost.*



BEFORE leaving this part of my narrative, let me attempt to recall something of a fascinating source of enjoyment that is here sent of heaven every night. At sundown the awning is withdrawn from the after-deck, leaving it open to the cool air of the evening. Then maybe witnessed a glorious process of formation in the sky, the limning out, as it were, of the constellations by the hand of night.

First appear the stars of chief magnitude faintly gleaming on

the yet clear blue dome. As these deepen and brighten in the rapidly waning light, the firmament becomes gradually overspread until it absolutely glows with a host of orbs, whose sparkle far exceeds that of our latitudes. Among these the form and shape of the sidereal groupings can be traced with more or less distinctness, and we contemplate spangled diagrams in the heavens, representing the objects from which the ancients gave the constellations their names.

I do not remember a single evening of the many we passed at sea, during our voyage to the several chief parts of India, and thence through the Straits of Malacca to China, on which this lovely recurring spectacle of the sky was overshadowed, or failed to present itself in greater or lesser glory. It afforded, indeed, to my mind a sufficient proof that the ancients, in applying specific names to the constellations, were guided by the resemblances they severally bore to the objects with whose names they are associated. I know perfectly well that this resemblance is not generally admitted by modern astronomical writers; but we must bear in mind that our masters in astronomy, the ancient Greeks, inhabited a region much more favourably situated for observing the phenomena of the celestial bodies; and the remark applies with still greater force to the nations of Assyria and Egypt, from whom, as the originators, the nomenclature of the stars has, in all probability, come down to us.

But as the sidereal scroll, though exceedingly brilliant on the passage to Bombay, is still further unfolded towards the Line, let us, for the purpose of a single illustration, transfer the scene to the southern waters of the China Sea, on a March night a few

months afterwards. Take the ordinary occasion of a calm afternoon, with nothing of nature visible around but a still prospect of azure sky and ocean, blended together in the distance, with the setting sun at the western horizon slowly sinking into the sea with the appearance of a great globe of fire. No sooner had the orb disappeared, than the horizon on either side became (as is always the case in these parts) lustrous with bright orange streaks, changing after a short interval into a rich ruby glow. Simultaneously with this process, and while daylight yet lingered in the vault overhead, some of the primary stars began to peer forth with a pale feeble ray. In a few minutes more, the short but beautiful twilight was over, and the heavens presented a deep blue background and a gleaming galaxy of stars.

Straight overhead appeared omnipresent Orion, looking precisely as he does in our northern latitudes, only much clearer and better defined, set in a slanting or semi-prostrate position, his right hand bright with Betelgeux, and his right foot with Rigel, both outstretched as if in action. With the several shapes of gleaming belt, dirk-like sword, and spangled cap of mail, to complete the figure, I felt bound to admit that the ancient stargazers, who saw in this grouping something like the outline of a warrior, were not misled either by their blindness or their fancy. Orion was closely followed by the Great Dog (*Canis Major*), an outline of life and energy, with ears erect and outstretched tail and forepaw. The Great Dog, I may state, is one of the most striking and distinct of the constellation forms; the magnificent star Sirius, which in our northern island reveals to us his place in the heavens, adorning the point of his foxy chin. Before Orion went the Twins, Castor and Pollux (represented in their

bodily form simply by two parallel lines of light proceeding from these stars), like himself prostrate and moving backwards. Underneath, in the West, appeared that well-known figure in Taurus, resembling an isosceles triangle, with fiery Aldebaran at the apex. This rough shape, however, of a 'bull's ear,' together with the two stars surmounting it, and said to represent the tip of the animal's horns, was all I could distinguish of the supposed figure of the Bull. Beyond these shone the Pleiades, consisting, not of seven orbs as we are accustomed to see that constellation with the naked eye at home, but of a large aggregation of lights.

On the other side of the hemisphere, a considerable space was occupied with the form of the Lion, revealing itself, of course, as no more than a rough outline of some such figure, yet sufficiently distinct when recognized repeatedly in its wonted place, to afford a familiar illustration of the forest king. Truly a royal beast, as there sketched in starlight—an enormous Lion *couchant*, his great face turned towards us, one bright paw put forth, and Regulus, like the star of his nobility, sparkling at his breast. Beside him was coiled the Serpent (Hydra), of which the shape was also distinctly recognizable, the snake-like head working, as it were, upwards into the sky, and the body winding out of sight below. Jupiter, large and bright, with Saturn as a companion planet, followed in the track; Procyon, glowing and twinkling like a great sun as he is, leading the Lion's way.

Looking next to the North, we could see the extensive group of stars which is associated with the name of Ursa Major (the Great Bear), but I could not in this case make out anything like a coherent form. Although a bodily outline is

said to be traceable, the only portion of it I could distinguish was the semblance of four great paws gleaming far up in the shining vault, together with that of the starry tail ending in Eta.

On the left at some distance below, the North or Pole Star, so often looked for at sea, was plainly visible, but not so the animal shape (if such exists) of the constellation Ursa Minor, of which it is the terminating point. To the right was beautiful Arcturus, and a little further on was Spica, these making, as every one knows, an equilateral triangle with Denebola at the point of the Lion's tail. Arcturus had just risen above the horizon, and still lower down Corona Borealis, that splendid bow in the heavens, familiar to our own skies, and popularly known as the Northern Crown, was coming up into view, its brightest jewel, Alpaca, sparkling with the light of countless diamonds.

Chiefly attractive, however, was the aspect of the Southern hemisphere, not only because it presented objects unknown to European skies, but because it was glowing with the grandest lights in the arch of the empyrean. Here the prow of the Great Ship (*Argo Navis*), illumined by Canopus, was pointed towards the Two Crosses farther down, both of which were objects of signal magnificence. The 'False Cross,' the nearest of two contiguous shapes of a cross, or rather, as it seemed to me, of a *square*, each formed of four lovely stars, was the larger in size, though not so surpassingly brilliant as its neighbour, the celebrated 'Golden Cross.' In the latter indeed a fifth, but comparatively very small star, appeared, not however so prominently as to mar the accuracy of the figure, which absolutely blazed with light, each of its great orbs glittering and pulsing like a thing of life. What with

these several grandly luminous forms, the two principal stars of Centaurus, a few degrees to the East, and several others of extraordinary size and lustre which follow one another just below the Golden Cross in a straight line to the horizon,—here, undoubtedly, was the chief locale of attraction in this glorious pyrotechny of the sky.

Thus, as we moved through the soft genial atmosphere of a tropical evening, it required no star-gazing propensity to trace with admiration and wonder the heavenly groupings in their wonted places at nightfall, and to notice from time to time as the hours passed on, the grand, silent revolution of the golden wheel, as star and constellation in their turn floated upwards into view, or sank flashing, as if instinct with vitality, below the western horizon.

Such is a cursory description of the general aspect of the stellar universe, as seen in more favourable circumstances than those which prevail in our island home. That some of my readers will consider it too fanciful, I am quite prepared to find, although, at the same time, I feel assured that only those will do so who have either never enjoyed or let slip the opportunity of judging for themselves. I had sometimes a young *compagnon de voyage* by my side, whom I may style my guiding star in these contemplations of the night, an accomplished votary of science, to whom even the deeper aspects of astronomical knowledge were thoroughly familiar.

He was returning from China, whither he had gone in a vain search for health. I occasionally found him in the evening alone in some retired corner of the ship, occupied with this, to him, never-failing source of pleasure; and more than

once, as I caught the expression of his mild eye roaming the firmament, I thought of the day—probably not far distant—when he would be numbered among

. those who have won
The vantage-ground of light beyond the stars ;

and, it might be, realized a nearer and clearer view of the shining scenery he loved so well. A few years have passed since then, and the anticipation is verified.

One feature of the voyage alone is without change or variation. By night and day, in light or darkness, through all the waking and sleeping hours alike, is heard, without intermission, the sound of the great propelling power that speeds the vessel on its way—a power gentle in the calm, but rising and roaring, as if in sympathy, with the storm. There is no escape from that monotonous music, which is thus incorporated with the routine of the voyage. Nor is there, perhaps, anything more haunting in the retrospect of its routine, than the never-tiring play of the great engines, dimly revealed by midnight lamps, working in their deep shadowy den at an hour when they have all the stir to themselves, only that their muffled iron tones are mingled with occasional faint noises, indicating the presence of human life and action in the depths below.

Since leaving Suez we had passed two Sundays on the voyage. On each of these the muster roll was called ; all hands, English and foreign, coming aft to pass before the captain and officers, and answer to their names. Another practice of the sacred day is the reading of the English Church Service by the captain. This duty, however, he only undertakes in the rare

absence of a clergyman among the passengers. The ministerial sermon, always cheerfully accorded and addressed to an earnest audience assembled either on deck, or in the saloon cabin, as the weather may render expedient, is heard, as is natural in the circumstances, with unusual interest; and the psalmody, which is generally raised with a harmonious, pre-arranged effect, is all the more imposing when, as frequently happens, the elements act as a choir, and it is accompanied by the music of the wind and waves.

In this respect we were fortunately situated during the run to Bombay, having on board, besides the English Church dignitary to whom I have referred, a converted Hindoo in the position of an ordained Christian minister, who having visited our country, was returning to resume his labours in his own. It may, as we are often told, be a difficult problem to draw aside the veil, and read the heart of a man who has undergone that extreme transformation. But this much is certain, that B—— L—— confronted his little congregation on the sea with an agreeable type of countenance and a calm earnest eye, when he spoke, not without eloquence and enthusiasm, of the coming day, when all heathendom would, like himself, be converted through the means appointed by Heaven, and expressed in the text which he had chosen, ‘Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.’

CHAPTER IX.

BOMBAY AND ITS PEOPLE.

Who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast
Amid its gay creation hues like hers?—THOMSON.

The very life-blood of our enterprise.—*King Henry IV.*

Up-bubboo! Paddy had not—a shirt to his back!!!—SCOTT.



N due time
the hilly re-
gions of
Bombay be-
came dimly
visible a-
head. Be-
fore enter-
ing the port

let us remember that Bombay proper is a small island, with an estimated area of about eighteen square miles, which was ceded, in 1661, by the Portuguese to Charles II. as a part of Queen

Catherine's dowry, and transferred in 1669 to the East India Company ; but that it is connected with the much larger Island of Salsette (having an area of 150 square miles) which fell into the hands of the Company by conquest early in 1775. Familiar as is the progressive record of our Indian empire since then, only an eye-witness can realize the vivid picture of life and energy that now bears testimony to the transformation of Bombay.



BOMBAY COAST.

As we approached the island, its truly magnificent harbour (the only really good one in India), which is formed of a semi-circle of small islands, appeared like a little inland sea with an array of masts, extending to a great distance, representing not only a variety of the native coasting craft at anchor, some with strange spoon-like prows bobbing above the water, and others

moving along by the aid of beautiful lateen sails, but ships and steamers from England and other distant countries, in the act of discharging or receiving their cargoes. We had plainly arrived at a great nucleus of traffic.

The engines being stopped, we were instantly surrounded on both sides by quite a piratical-looking crew of black nude harpies in boats—a race of creatures indigenous to all eastern harbours.



BOMBAY FROM MALABAR HILL.

For shouting and scuffling, these may be regarded as men without worldly compeers. Yet, after all, what can we think in mercy or say in reason, but that such is *their* way of striving to earn an honest rupee in the nautical line, amidst the terrible competition that exists in the hot blazing harbour of Bombay.

Before our eyes lay the city and its neighbourhood, a charming

prospect to tempt us away from the din and clamour with which we were surrounded—a prospect of square-built, Venetian windowed houses, glistening white in the sunshine, copiously interspersed with rich tropical vegetation, and terminating in a magnificent background of mountain scenery. The seaward view, sparkling with light and dotted with sails, was also attractive, but not so the aspect of the shore, which was black, monotonous, and deserted.

We landed in one of the native ‘bunderboats’—a huge hulking craft, in shape and size similar to one of our Scotch coal gabbarts, and furnished with no other protection from the sun than a small receptacle at the stern, into which, of course, we crept forthwith. This elegant specimen of marine architecture is propelled by ten or a dozen rowers, the oars being in the form of a straight pole with a circle at the end. Having secured their freight, the clamour with which the boatmen sought to obtain it at once tones down to the point of sufferance, but the spectacle of bare legs and otherwise undraped figures so unblushingly presented by the squad, in near proximity to the eye, forms the European stranger’s first free introduction to one of the most overwhelming novelties of the East.

The lesson is a rough one to begin with, and as the situation demands that it must needs be thoroughly acquired, the feelings of the too tenderly susceptible are thus scandalized and blunted at a blow, ere yet their feet have touched the land where there is no escape from the natural symmetry and proportions of the human form divine!

We were received on shore by the good friend whose hospitality we had been invited to enjoy during our stay in Bombay,

and at once driven home in his carriage. A pleasant home it was, situated, like most of the European residences, a few miles out of town, having, besides the floral charms which surrounded it, the advantage of being near the sea, which every day we looked on it was bright and beautiful, although scarcely approachable, through the black slippery stones of the intervening shore.

The Indian bungalow may be described as a tidy, square-built cottage consisting of one floor only, its doors wide, and its windows (which are large and numerous) supplied with Venetian blinds or shutters in the absence of glass. It is built of brick, but white-plastered with *chunam*, a beautiful kind of lime manufactured from the 'shells of ocean,' and is always surrounded by a wide verandah, in the grateful shadow of which the inmates sit, or rather recline, on cane chairs so cunningly constructed as to afford sweet support to the whole languid anatomy of man. Here the *chota hasseree* or 'little breakfast' of tea and toast is served in the dawn of the morning to those who are wisely prepared to go forth for an hour's ride or walk, before the sun rises too high for purposes of Anglo-Saxon locomotion. Here, too, gentlemen come after dinner to be refreshed by the cool evening breeze, together with such additional exhilaration as may be derived from 'brandy *pawnee*' and cigars. Within, the bungalow consists of clean spacious apartments, having asphalt floors partially laid with matting, and not hampered with excess of furniture, which in Bombay comprises a tasteful display of the celebrated black wood indigenous to the place, together with ornate objects of native industry in sandal-wood or ivory. *Punkahs* hang over the dining table, or wherever else *punkahs* may be needful, and curtains of bobbinette, where curtains ought to

be, complete the free airy aspect of this bright Eastern domicile. With these draperies nearly every bed in a *pukka* or well-appointed house is enclosed, and even with the security they afford, he who would find repose within their shade, after outwitting the mosquitoes to the utmost of his ability by raising the light folds of gossamer only so far as will enable him to wriggle quickly through, should see, before he lays down his head, that not one tiny tormentor has forestalled him in the occupation of his downy den. If he happens to be a 'fresh man,' a single specimen of this voracious tribe will serve to spoil his rest, and send him forth disfigured in the morning to encounter renewed attacks from greater forces, where no muslin curtains interpose their protection.

The kitchen and offices are in the 'compound' or enclosed ground out of doors, where also the large staff of native servants find the slender accommodation accorded them, sleeping at the best on bare charpoys, or cotton-wadded rugs laid down anywhere. It was something of a novelty to find a complete domestic establishment consisting, with the single exception of the nurse or ayah, of the masculine gender. The turn out at dinner of butler and assistants in clean light livery of turban and cotton wrapper was very neat and presentable—the termination of these habiliments in a display of bare feet and ankles notwithstanding.

Outside in the compound, palm, acacia, and other trees, some of them bearing flowers, and mingled with shrubbery of much beauty and variety, rear into the sunshine a canopy of green leaves; but all around, the grass (except for a short period during the rains) is scorched into a yellow hue. The garden *may be* and frequently is trim and blooming, but only where

daily labour and expense are freely bestowed on artificial means of watering, is this result possible. Wanting these, it dies sun-stricken, and speedily becomes a wilderness of dead leaves and flowers. But even at the best, with its rank dusty luxuriance and bare walks of soil, it is but a poor substitute for the green-carpeted and pebble-strewn Edens of the Western world.

Such are the arrangements and general appearance of the better class of modern residences in Bombay. The mass of the poor population find sufficient shelter as of old in mud huts and dwellings formed of bamboo and palm leaves.

Beyond the precincts of our friend's fine compound nothing within view was unattractive but the seashore—a blank stretch of dull brown sand or black flint stones—a scorching, shelterless spot, forsaken even by the natives themselves. The bright ocean beyond, enlivened with its shining, wing-shaped, lateen sails, had thus the appearance of a luminous pattern surrounded by a dark funereal border. One afternoon I picked my way through the long tract of glistening trap-stones which lay between the bank in front of our domicile and the water-line, where a dingy green surge mingled its lonely strain with the universal music of the sea. Here the mind of a new comer is overwhelmed with the contrast between the dreary, deserted beach of Bombay and the bracing shores of 'merry England,' vocal with the sounds of life and health, down to the prattle of infancy.

The drive from the landing-stage had afforded us a glimpse of the vicinity of Bombay, comprising a series of diverging roads having on either side the pretty bungalows or handsome

villas of the European and native gentry. These dwellings extend for several miles round the city, standing for the most part in enclosures of variable though generally limited extent. Some are encircled with high walls, while all are surrounded by a luxuriance of trees and plants, among which the date and cocoa-nut palms abound. The enormous spread of gigantic leaves, both here and in the country beyond, constituted to us the chief novelty of the landscape, growing as these were, not under glass as we had been accustomed to see tropical foliage at home, but luxuriantly in the open air.

The social routine is not distinguished by much variety or frequent change. It comprises the *chota hasseree*, or 'little breakfast', at dawn, the ride or walk at sunrise, the delicious bath on returning, and then the breakfast, properly so called—a substantial meal, exhibiting, like every other repast, the native skill in cookery. Men of business afterwards go forth in a carriage of some kind to their respective spheres of labour, where the indispensable luncheon or 'tiffin,' of which all comers are invited to partake, is served early in the afternoon. Thence they return at nightfall (taking the Esplanade and a gossip by the way) to enjoy the evening dinner and the sweets of social intercourse, where cheering nectars flow, and cooling *punkahs* swing.

The chief place of residence among the English in Bombay is Malabar Hill—a wooded rising ground on the coast, about three miles beyond the city; the numerous bungalows being built in terraces extending from the shore line to the top of the eminence.

It was naturally with a strong feeling of expectancy that I

accompanied my friend next morning to his place of business in the city there to witness and mingle with what I had always understood to be the most stirring nucleus of life in India. And stirring indeed it was. The hot dusty streets were thronged with a multitude including nearly all the known characters of an eastern crowd, together with the different conveyances common to the place—carts and waggons, *hackries*, with patient bullocks in



PALANQUIN AND BEARERS.

front and bawling drivers behind, passenger-cabs, *buggies*, and palanquins, shortly styled 'palkies.' These last are wooden cribs with a pole at each end, wherein those who can afford the luxury of their use and have acquired the art of entering them without being 'spilt,' recline luxuriously sustained on the shoulders of coolies, being thus cased like precious edibles in boxes of suitable size, and delivered from door to door free from the injurious effects of the sun. The poor city Arabs or coolies perform all the rough work of the place, a light

covering round the loins being usually their only clothing. Among well dressed men the garment in general use is a piece of bleached shirting, gracefully disposed round the body, the legs being bare from a little below the knee, and the feet cased in Morocco slippers with curved toes. Thus suitably attired alike for freedom of movement and of ventilation, and crowned with huge turbans, or fantastic 'puggeries' (head-dresses) in various colours, Hindoo and Mahometan citizens, some of them men of material bulk as well as of solid wealth, parade the business quarter, or stalk majestically through the European 'go-downs' (warehouses) in the prosecution of their really extensive transactions. Another feature of attraction in the crowd is supplied by the members of the great Parsee community, who appear clad in the usual *angrika* (a close-fitting coat of white silk or cotton), with silk *payjamas* (trousers), and wearing the peculiar high square hat by which they are everywhere distinguished. The priesthood of the tribe alone are habited in hats and *pay-jamas* both of white cotton.

The extremes however of the heterogeneous multitude here assembled may be said to meet when some Persian 'exquisite,' gorgeous from head to foot in array of velvet and gold, is borne past the spot where a fakeer with foul matted hair and naked distorted body sits in the thick dust (itself polluted by his touch), whining for an alms. Not, strange to say, that the mendicant feels himself humiliated by the contrast; on the contrary he may be and often is the more selfish and conceited personage of the two, being religiously of opinion that the filthy squalor of which he furnishes a specimen is the true livery of honour in this world and the surest passport to glory in the next.

This may be the proper place to introduce a passing word on the modes of dress prevailing among the people of India. Any one, however, who desires to be thoroughly conversant with the subject, will find it fully discussed in the interesting investigations of Dr. Forbes Watson, published last year.

The doctor, in the course of his researches, discovered one small tribe of *Gonds*, who wore no dress at all, and he informs us that there are at least two sects who consider the use of clothes immoral as a violation of the law of nature! He also calculates that of the 200,000,000 people in India now more or less under British rule, about 20,000,000 are destitute of clothing of any kind.

As regards the dress of the men it mainly consists of turbans, *loongees*, and *dhooties*. Of these the turban is the chief feature, being an essential symbol of rank and wealth. It is usually made of cotton, although sometimes of silk or wool, and is coloured with all the hues of the rainbow, according to fancy, or in conformity with the various social and religious distinctions.

The *loongee* is a scarf, varying in length and width from the dimensions suitable for a child to those pertaining to the full adult, and is simply but neatly disposed round the shoulders and chest. There is now in use a very large and constantly increasing variety of style and pattern in such scarfs, bright colourings being greatly prized, more especially the celebrated Turkey red ground, illuminated with yellow and green, or full chintz flowers and figures, with large objects in the form of pines and peacocks at either end.

The *dhootie* is simply a long narrow piece of cloth, which the Hindoo, after giving the end two or three turns round

the waist, passes between the legs and fastens under the folds in front or behind, the Mahometan spreading it more out, and allowing it to hang down. Where poverty precludes the use of even such a garment as this, a mere rag of cambric is made to answer the purpose, the end being turned over a string circling the haunches. With or without a turban, however, the *dhootie* in some form usually comprises the entire dress of the poorer class, whether Mahometans or Hindoos, so that the great majority of the men of India are not much encumbered with clothing. Nor do those Hindoos render themselves more attractive who disfigure the brow with an unseemly daub of paint, representing the mark of their caste, and communicating to all men the interesting fact that they have on that day said their prayers.

Indian women, and more especially the Mahometan portion of them, sometimes assume petticoats in winter, but their principal dress is the *saree*, a scarf of from one to two yards wide, and varying in length according to the bulk of the figure. 'As usually worn, one end is passed twice round the waist, the upper border tied in a string knot, and allowed to fall in graceful folds to the ankle, thus forming a sort of skirt—a portion of one leg being only partially concealed by the Hindoo. The other end is passed in front across the left arm and shoulder, one end being brought over the top of the head. It is then allowed to fall behind and over the right shoulder and arm.' A showy kerchief also is often worn on the head, by those who are able to afford that decoration. The material of the *saree* is generally cotton, but it may be silk, or a mixture of both fabrics. As a rule, Hindoo and Mahometan women have

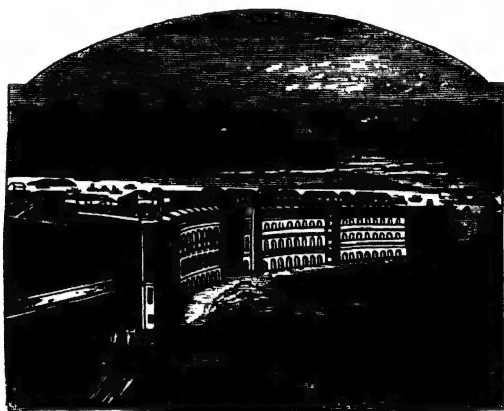
their own special patterns, and here too, among the bright colours in vogue, Turkey red is held in chief estimation.

So much on the general subject of dress, but it remains to be added that, except perhaps in Bombay itself, the stranger sees no more of the fair sex in India than such of its members as necessity or want may bring in his way. Owing, however, to the advanced civilization of Bombay, the welcome face of woman appears in its highways. She is readily distinguishable from her lord by the absence of the turban or *puggerie*, and, when well attired, is wrapped from head to foot in a stylish, many-coloured print or *saree*, having ornamental ends, which hang pendant at the sides. Her jet black hair, even her smooth brown skin, glistens with cocoa-nut oil, and the well rounded arms (which the *saree* is not permitted to confine) swing like pendulums as she goes. In the all important matter of ornament, the splendour of bracelets and anklets made of bright coloured beads, and glittering rings for the ears and toes, minister to that universal feminine desire, which in her case broidered sleeves and silk stockings would fail to gratify. But unfortunately the list of decorations includes the disgusting nose-ring which everywhere throughout the three Presidencies disfigures the female countenance as an indispensable requisite of fashionable adornment, and which, being generally of large size, and attached to one nostril only, assumes the appearance of an unwholesome excrescence.

That woman's life in Bombay is usefully employed, as well as openly spent, may be gathered from the fact that she is usually observed to be carrying something, it may be a bundle of food or clothing, a small living miniature of herself, or a *lota*

(pitcher) poised with the ease of practised dexterity on 'reason's throne.'

Although Bombay, as a city, has been hitherto considered inferior to Calcutta, the extraordinary changes now in progress bid fair to reverse the comparison even with the city of palaces. The spacious Square, around and in the vicinity of which the European warehouses were situated at the period of my visit,



ELPHINSTONE CIRCLE.

may already be said to exist no more, the old buildings having been pulled down, and a magnificent new range erected, to which the name of 'Elphinstone Circle' has been given. This splendid amphitheatre of high elegant warehouses, enriched with ornamental trellis-work, and with green painted iron balconies on every stage, not only indicates the marvellous progress of the city, but may be regarded as one of the noblest marts of commerce in the world. Within these palatial 'go-downs,' as well

as in all the principal streets and buildings of the city, the modern conveniences of water by gravitation and gas have been introduced. The ground and sunk floors are used for storing the bales and boxes of merchandise. Overhead are the offices where, in a range of spacious apartments, native clerks execute in good English the counting-house work of the establishment, and European partners, with their assistants, sit airily attired in clean white linen, engaged in that voluminous correspondence which the weekly Bombay mail now entails, or negotiating with the native dealers, whose stately figures constantly perambulate the place.

It is only a natural result of the advanced social condition of Bombay that these dealers should, generally speaking, be superior to the members of their class elsewhere in India. With sufficient independence to resent an injury, they unite a desire to be on good terms with their European friends, with whom they are rather fond of going through the ceremony of shaking hands. Their brethren of Madras and Bengal on the contrary, while maintaining, perhaps, a cringing deference of manner towards the too ingenuous Sahib who may appear inclined to pay them that compliment, are apt to retire on some pretext or other before his advancing steps, in order to avoid the degradation of the meditated contact! I may here explain that the business transactions of European firms in Bombay are mainly conducted by a 'Broker' attached to the establishment, that he is paid by a commission received from the buying or selling dealer (an extremely bad rule by the way), and that he guarantees the debts to his employers, who have thus merely to provide the materials of trade, and leave the rest to him. This system, however,

such as it is, exhibits a great improvement on the method originally prevalent in Calcutta of engaging a wealthy native trader, called a *banyan*, who also provided the capital; and it is further satisfactory to know that the position of the broker himself is being gradually converted into that of a negotiator or salesman, acting entirely in the pay of his employers. English merchants themselves, indeed, with the aid of European assistants, now conduct the transactions of some houses.

As an Indian city, Bombay possesses this interesting peculiarity, that the Parsee community occupy, by reason of their number, intelligence, and wealth, a prominent position in the prosecution of its commerce and the regulation of its affairs. The Parsee broker of Bombay is a man of mark in the mercantile system, and not without reason, as every one knows who has made his acquaintance and seen him 'in harness.' He is indeed a highly capable man of business; affable, sober, punctual, vigilant, his eye bright and his head cool and clear.

Reversing European custom, the mode of conducting negotiations is for the buyer to begin by making an offer. The bargaining process is usually enacted by means of signs given with the joined hands of buyer and seller hidden under a handkerchief, or bit of cloth called the *pachoori*, which, on certain occasions, must be sought and found in its corner before business in the practical sense is possible. Not a word is spoken while the *pachoori* sways to the hidden action of the men's fingers. As the fencing proceeds, the countenance of the offering dealer gives no sign, thus rendering all the more ludicrous the eager face of the broker, whose repeatedly raised eyebrows and incredulous stare serve to express his real or feigned astonishment

at what he desires to characterize as the extraordinary illiberality of his customer.

In due time the buyer may find reason to reciprocate these gestures, and the pantomime occasionally ends by both the hands, so lovingly clasped beneath the *pachoori*, being suddenly with-



STRIKING A BARGAIN.

drawn in a simultaneous ebullition of well affected irritation and disgust! As a rule, however, the transaction is conducted with celerity and ease, and in a spirit on the part of the native buyer which is all that an Englishman could desire.

Such is the Indian mode of business, whereby the products of the West, in large and increasing measure, silently pass into

consumption, while European exchanges, notably on market days, are ringing with noise and clamour.

The native bazaars of Bombay are of course the grand centres of traffic. Here every variety of merchandise, home and foreign, is displayed for sale in the dingy recesses called shops, the labyrinthine maze of which, together with the stifling habitations of their possessors above, and the dusty ways between, constitute the bazaar. In this serene and elegant retreat, native merchants, wearing perhaps no other robe than the *dhootie* or waistband, sit cross-legged within little shadowy chambers surrounded by their wares—food, clothing, articles of *vertu*, gold and silver ornaments, or brazen pots and pans. Between the considerable trader ensconced among his high piles of piece goods, or store of bales and boxes, and the vender of a paltry handkerchief in the crowd, there may be no difference in appearance. A man worth four or five lacs of rupees, looking out from his den in an undraped condition for custom, is sometimes as poor in his outward appearance as the anna-less wretch sitting in the dust beside his door. Yet not a few of this unrepresentable order of bazaar traders engage in very extensive transactions both in the disposal of produce and the purchase of imports, the wonder being, according to our notions of society, that being thus persons of wealth and consideration, they should choose to live the life and wear the livery of want.

CHAPTER X.

BOMBAY LIFE AND INDUSTRY.

Thus while around the wave subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign
And industry begets a love of gain.—GOLDSMITH.

Behold him setting in his western skies,
The shadows lengthening as the vapours rise.—DRYDEN.



PASSING out of the 'Fort,' as the city proper is still called (although the walls which till lately encircled it have been removed), our attention was first arrested by the numerous tents, which like a little canvas town covered a part of the plain, extending from the wayside to the shore line, and known as the 'Esplanade.' Those laid down in regular rows were manifestly the 'lines' of a military encampment, but all the rest were private residences, in which

a portion of the European population had chosen to seek protection from the climate of Bombay.

And wherefore not? It is now the month of November, and with the exception, perhaps, of a sprinkling of rain in January, every day that dawns between this and June will probably run its course in a blaze of sunshine. These simple dwellings are sectioned into small chambers, neatly furnished with all the requisites of family life, and refreshingly open to the breeze.

People who would be rid of the expensive arrangements pertaining to a bungalow or house, properly so called, may here reside in comfort, surrounded by all the domestic luxuries; though the position is one which we are accustomed to associate with the rough, self-denying life of a warlike encampment. The time comes round, no doubt, when the camp is raised, and its occupants retire before the advent of the monsoon, as soldiers retreat from the impending attack of an invincible foe. That is an invader, however, which neither advances with insidious steps, nor lingers long on the scene thus abandoned to its power. Throughout the warm bright months of fair weather, no elemental force ruffles or penetrates the canvas thus spread beneath the glowing sky; and there are those who, speaking from experience, extol the airy accommodation it affords as superior to that which is to be found in chambers of brick and lime. The marquee then, as a place of habitation, is one of the social institutions of India, and is frequently to be seen, in groups within the compounds, or immediate vicinity of handsome villas, whose hospitable accommodation it so far supplements. Or the pavilion may belong to the guest himself, who in this way brings not only his portmanteau, but his bedroom along with him! It is, indeed, no derogation from

human dignity to dwell under canvas on the Esplanade, and it may even be added (with of course becoming reverence), that some of the tents of Bombay are, like those of ancient Israel, honourable abodes through the popular position of their occupants. Without speculating, then, on the *status* which families residing in tents on an English common would be likely to occupy in society, we have here an illustration, on a broad scale, of the wholesome truth, that a man's social elevation is not everywhere dependent on the magnitude of his domain.

It is said of a small community in the north of Europe, that when the day comes round (as come it does every year) on which the sun sets not to reappear during many weeks of starlight, the people are accustomed to meet on the top of a neighbouring hill, to witness the departure of the luminary, and wave it a solemn farewell as it sinks from view. Somewhat similar in external aspect to this ceremony is the scene enacted by our countrymen at an appointed place, in each of the principal cities of India, every evening towards sunset. The Bombay *rendezvous* takes place on the Esplanade, and thither, as the glowing orb draws near the horizon, friends congregate for awhile, walking, riding, or driving, to wind up the day with an interchange of greetings, and to enjoy the merry music of a military band. Even here little or no intercourse prevails between the native and European inhabitants, but the gathering is all the more imposing and picturesque that it includes Hindoos, Mahometans, and Parsees, whose wealthy surroundings, comely presence, and dignified demeanour are features peculiar to the Bombay Presidency. This daily convention, however, like the twilight in which it is held, is of brief duration. Soon

the fast-gathering darkness overshadows every face, and speedily disperses the crowd, which may be said, without exaggeration, to betake itself helter-skelter from the place. Old residents, who remember things as they were, still look with wonder on the scene: a long line of dashing equipages, each drawn by a pair of fine Arabian horses, rushing homeward amid the gathering gloom, filled with the rank and gentility of Bombay. But alas! within the last few years, local misfortunes have to a large extent shorn the show of its glory.

There is not in the history of the world's commerce a more startling tale than that of these reverses, from the rise of the speculative mania in 1861 to its collapse four years afterwards, when the incredible fortunes realized by native, Parsee, and European adventurers melted away like the golden stores of fairy-land. A few of the details are worth preserving. At the present hour we have still the spectacle of a great wreck, in course of being cleared away through the medium of commissions and courts of law. To say nothing of the disasters encountered by individuals and private copartneries, the 'Bombay Almanack' for 1868 gives a list of joint-stock companies in course of liquidation, to the number of not fewer than ninety-eight; viz.

Bank and Financial	56
Spinning	1
Shipping	10
Land and Reclamation	2
Miscellaneous	29
	<hr/> 98

Under the last-mentioned heading we have such titles as 'Brick and Tile,' 'Hotels,' 'Farming,' 'Building,' 'Oil Press-

ing,' 'International Exhibition,' 'Land Investment,' 'Patent Slip and Foundry,' 'Insurance,' 'Coffee Plantation,' and the various projects altogether are calculated to represent the extraordinary sums of 62,000,000*l.* sterling of subscribed and 24,000,000*l.* of paid-up capital. Such figures afford a clue to the mysterious disappearance of those fabulous fortunes, which were realized in Bombay after the outbreak of the American war.

From the preceding returns it will be seen that the items of spinning and weaving scarcely figure in the catalogue. This is explained by the fact, that these trades constitute the principal manufacturing industry of the place, the yarns and cloths produced, however, consisting, for obvious reasons, only of the heavier and coarser kinds. As a rule, the mills, of which there are a goodly number, are well appointed, supervised by European managers and engineers, and furnished with the best machinery from England. One establishment alone in the present year has 60,000 spindles in operation, with an average daily attendance of 1,600 employés; in others the number of hands engaged varies from 800 to 200.

It is true that the products of these works compete successfully with the like manufactures from Europe, and will probably continue to do so; but the exclusion of the latter from the Indian market need not, therefore, be apprehended. Machinery—a product of our own country and a perishable commodity, which, as it thus appears, is even in India superseding manual labour—cannot be cheaply transmitted across the sea like cotton goods and yarns, together with all the imported stuffs necessary to their production. In Bombay, therefore, the application of this

mechanical power, is confined to certain stout and bulky fabrics, in which alone competition, and that a close one, is possible.

The process of bringing home cotton from India in one ship and returning it in another, manufactured into jacconet or cambric cloths, may to the inexperienced appear to involve a considerable loss both of labour and capital; but a very simple calculation of 'freight and charges' will serve to show how trifling is the whole cost, as applied to a large supply of light clothing. The want of good coal, with which no other fuel can compete in raising steam for the purposes of mechanical production, is of itself more than sufficient to outweigh all the drawbacks of distance; and although the coal seams of India (of which I shall have something to say in the proper place) are now being rapidly developed and brought into use, the quality of the yield everywhere is inferior to that of our own country. When to this consideration is added that of the increased facility of internal conveyance arising from the rapid spread of railways, it is only reasonable to conclude that the field is becoming more and more our own in the gradual extinction of the handloom, and those other rough old modes of native manufacture which still hold their ground in the more retired rural districts.

But the bursting of the speculative bubble, with all its dire consequences, has not enfeebled the normal vitality of Bombay. The current of business again flows in its natural course, with perceptible progress. In 1866-67, the last year for which we have returns, the sea-borne trade of the island (which in 1854-55 was about 16,000,000*l.*, and in 1858-59 about 34,000,000*l.*) was found to have risen to the value of 46,750,000*l.* sterling.

Nor were all the projects wholly unproductive which dis-

tinguished that feverish episode in the mercantile history of the island. The Elphinstone Land Company—coexistent with the mania, but not its offspring—has already accomplished greater ends than the most hopeful of the defeated schemes promised to fulfil. A miserable foreshore and marshy waste adjoining the city, and equal in extent to its former self, when comprised within the walls of the Fort, have been converted into useful land. Bombay has been rapidly enlarged in this direction. Extensive shipping accommodation and a large railway station now occupy the site of the offensive shore line and the sedgy pools. When I have added that the materials of this great work—the earth and stones which a fleet of steamers and other boats, together with railway trains, daily bore to the busy scene of reclamation—were quarried from the neighbouring hills, accessible by land or sea, it will be sufficiently evident that an Indian sun has no paralyzing influence on the enterprising settlers of Bombay.

So much for already accomplished projects in the capital of a little Presidency, which last year expended nearly 1,500,000*l.* sterling on public works. But the prospective change is still more extensive.

The new Elphinstone College, costing 50,000*l.*, is now completed, and among the numerous other buildings of which either the plans have been drawn out or the foundations already laid, we hear of the 'Secretariat,' expected to cost 120,000*l.*; the 'High Court,' 140,000*l.*; the University, 100,000*l.*; the new Post Office, 60,000*l.*; and the Public Works Office, 40,000*l.*

Bombay may thus be regarded somewhat in the light of a splendid new city now being built in India.

Turning for a moment to the general condition of the country in connection with such details of progress, we find, as regards the commercial advancement of British India, that the imports and exports of 1868 representing the value of the 'foreign trade,' exceeded the enormous sum of 101,000,000*l.* sterling, having thus been quadrupled in about a quarter of a century. Among the important works, in addition to irrigation schemes, accomplished during the past ten years, several thousand miles of good roads have been constructed throughout the ten provinces.

Of the 5,000 miles of railway planned during Lord Dalhousie's term of office in 1853, upwards of 4,000 are now open for traffic, and the remaining 1,000 are in course of construction. In addition to these, an extension of 820 more miles was afterwards sanctioned. Such undertakings have hitherto been effected under the security of the Indian Government. The whole expenditure involved (exclusive of the cost of land), amounting in March last to about 79,000,000*l.* sterling, is, with the completion of the sanctioned lines, estimated at about 90,000,000*l.* in all.

In such a novel sphere of speculation as the construction of railways through the deserts and jungles of India, progress could not otherwise be made. But the inducements offered by the Secretary of State for the formation of companies were so unusually favourable, that Indian railways soon became a favourite investment. Government, on its own part, only reserved the power to purchase, after the lapse of twenty-five or fifty years, any line at its then market value, calculated on an average of three years, and in the meantime to serve the interest of the travelling public by lowering the fares in cases where the profits came to exceed ten per cent. On the other hand, however, any

railway company might, after a short existence of three months, hand over their scheme to the Government, which engaged, on receiving six months' notice, to reimburse the whole of the expenditure. The capital raised for this important object has been almost wholly supplied from our own country; to such an extent, indeed, that out of 53,000 proprietors, scarcely 400 are natives of India.

Such, as I have said, *has been* the policy in vogue; but henceforth the construction of railways, for their original cost and maintenance, will devolve on the Government. The deficiency hitherto resulting from the inability of the railways to support themselves, and provide the dividend of five per cent. guaranteed by Government, has been lessening year by year; and there is reason to hope that at no distant period the State, while thus raising the condition of the country, will be entirely relieved from loss as regards the railways themselves. The progressive plan comprises additional schemes to the extent of 10,000 miles, so that the legislature is now, at least, fully alive to the great social and commercial importance of the Indian railway system. It cannot be said, however, that more than a beginning has yet been made. The few thousand miles of rail now formed, at wide intervals, on the immense continent of India, only traverse the country like solitary tracks on the ocean. A system of commensurate extent must be the work of many years; how rich and abundant its fruits may be it were difficult to conjecture.

Meanwhile, a glance at the map will show the extent of the existing ramifications which, probably in the course of another year, will be sufficiently advanced to connect Bombay with Madras

and Calcutta in unbroken lines, there being already through communication between the latter city and Delhi, distant more than 1,000 miles. In 1871 the whole passenger traffic of India will be streaming through Bombay. The great material transformation thus being effected throughout the country must immensely enhance the trade and traffic of that city, which, important as it has hitherto been as the western capital of India, now seems destined to expand even more rapidly than heretofore—to become, in fact, the greatest among the harbours of the world. Already the bulk of that immense current of human life, comprehended in the phrase ‘overland travellers to India,’ has begun to flow thither as to a centre of communication, rendered especially convenient by the new weekly mail service to and from Suez, carrying nearly all the Indian letters. The frequency and regularity, however, of the overwhelming amount of correspondence thus passing through Bombay in these days is by no means a subject of unalloyed congratulation to those who are personally concerned in its production. More especially is this true of our toiling fellow-countrymen in India, who, in the exercise of their competitive energies and unsparing zeal, have long since accustomed the recipients of letters in Europe to expect full market advices by each successive mail, and to imagine themselves extremely ill-used if these are not forthcoming. Finally, there can be no doubt as to the healthy condition of this magnificent arena for the prosecution of British industry, for we find that the total revenue of India, as estimated for 1868–69, amounts to between 48,000,000*l.* and 49,000,000*l.* sterling (an increase of 4,000,000*l.* in four years, or 15,000,000*l.* since the year preceding the Mutiny). The whole public debt which,

in England and India together, at present, scarcely exceeds 96,000,000*l.* sterling, is thus no more than the equivalent of two years' income. The receipts from land, about 20,000,000*l.* ; from opium, 8,000,000*l.* ; and from salt, 5,700,000*l.*, constitute the chief items of this handsome revenue, the remainder being derived from customs, stamps, and other duties, together with the tributary contributions of native States.

So much for the achievements of our commerce (for such, indeed, they are), in reference to which thousands of Englishmen now trading to India can remember the East India Company declaring that *there was no outlet there for British manufactures!* Holding these views, and with no conception of such a productive power as our country has now acquired, the prophetic mind of that grand old association would then, perhaps, have ridiculed the idea that before half-a-century had elapsed our little island would possess the means of weaving cotton cloth for the Indian markets every year, sufficient in length, let us say, to girdle the two countries in a calico bond of union. Yet an easy computation will show that the quantity, of all widths, annually manufactured in Britain and shipped to India, would encircle many worlds like our own!



CHAPTER XI.

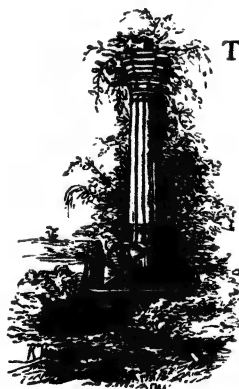
A CHAPTER OF VARIETIES.

History is indeed little more than the register of the crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind.—GIBBON.

Here shall the Press the people's rights maintain,
Unawed by influence and unbribed by gain.—JOSEPH STORY.

'Tis education forms the common mind.—POPE.

Children of the sun.—YOUNG.



T now remains to supplement the details of the preceding chapter with a cursory glimpse of the land and its teeming populations, together with the strange romantic history of which they form the subject.

The official statistical tables published in 1869 assign to British India an area of 983,902 square miles, with a population of 148,457,654; and to the native States an area of 690,697 square miles, with a population of 47,909,199. The French and Portuguese possessions figure in the enumeration as having 1,254 miles of area, and a population of 517,149, making up the grand totals to an area of 1,675,853 miles, and a population of 196,884,002 souls. Thus the French and Portuguese scarcely retain a footing in the country, and as the rulers

of these native States—Rajah, Thackur, Nawab or Maharajah—are more or less under our control, it may be said that the British sceptre is supreme among the numerous races of the Indian plains. As regards the different nations comprised in these enormous figures, the 'Bombay Almanack' publishes in last year's issue the following table :—

Hindus	150,000,000
Sikhs	2,000,000
Parsees	160,000
Native Christians	200,000
Europeans	150,000
Jains	5,000,000
Mahometans	15,000,000
Aboriginal and other tribes	20,000,000

The principal languages are the

Hindi, spoken by about	40,000,000
Hindustani "	30,000,000
Bengali "	30,000,000
Telegu "	14,000,000
Tamil "	12,000,000
Punabi, Mahrathi "	10,000,000

In this somewhat general enumeration the number of the Mahometan population (usually estimated at 30,000,000) is evidently understated. But the most striking item it contains is the strangely insignificant number representing the ruling power. And Government is magnanimously engaged in imbuing the native mind with that knowledge which is the source of its own supremacy. There are now no fewer than 20,000 State-supported educational institutions in the country, with an average attendance of nearly 700,000 pupils, of whom perhaps one-fifth are Mahometans, nearly all the rest being Hindoos. The whole system is maintained at an annual cost exceeding 755,000*l.*, of which about 460,000*l.* is contributed by Govern-

ment. In this return are comprised village schools for the instruction of natives in their own language, and district schools where English also is taught. Above these are colleges entirely devoted to English education ; Presidency colleges, confined to law and the arts ; colleges for engineering and medical studies ; and normal seminaries. At the head of the system stand the three universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, all modelled on the London plan.

Speaking of these various establishments in general terms, they are popularly known as well-appointed schools, imparting the several branches of a practically useful education, together with instruction in every department of science and art.

The leaven of knowledge which such a system of tuition is incorporating with the mass of native ignorance and bigotry, is working out a great, and perhaps rapid, change in the moral aspect of the country, the more so as the golden tide of British bounty is flowing towards these seminaries with yearly increasing strength, and still multiplying their number. Thus the hideous structure called Brahminism is now everywhere confronted with real temples of learning, wherein grave conclaves of dark-visaged youths in turbans and puggeries may be seen from day to day bending over the Bible, volumes on science and art, geographical or geological charts, treatises on astronomy or natural history, and other standard guides to knowledge. Through the courtesy of the Rev. Dr. John Wilson, a gentleman celebrated, not merely in Bombay but throughout India alike for proficiency in Hindoo literature and good deeds in the way of education and charity, we were afforded an opportunity of witnessing the large educational establishment so long

fostered by his care. The children's classes were especially interesting and suggestive of good results; order, regularity, and quietness being everywhere prevalent, and the pupils apparently all influenced by a feeling of affectionate regard for their learned and considerate instructor.

It will appear in the course of my narrative that such cities as Calcutta, Madras, Lucknow, Agra, and Delhi are, like Bombay, well provided with seminaries conducted by accomplished English teachers, and regulated more or less on the same useful basis. We must bear in mind, however, that even the grown-up Hindoos, who, as I have stated, may be found in these academies diligently studying the Bible, make no profession of faith in its doctrines. Nor are they required to express any opinion on the subject. A mutual understanding exists, that they are at liberty to make what use they please of the instruction thus generously provided for them, and this they acquire with an aptitude of which, for my own part, I had not deemed them capable. But let it not be supposed that these are poor scholars; their attendance as adult students, and consequent command of leisure, rather indicate the contrary. Many of the children also are sons and daughters of wealthy baboos, whose free use of these Christian educational establishments thus manifests a greater liberality of sentiment than of purse.

It now remains to be seen what new colouring the hand of time will impart to this impressive picture of social life in India. Not that any possible result can detract from the duty of educating the ignorant. But here we cannot help remembering the paucity of our own numbers throughout the country and the

numerical insignificance of the British element in the Indian army, shown by the last returns to consist of about 65,000 British associated with 123,000 native soldiers; and we are forced to accept the conclusion to which such facts point—that this empire of ours over a million and a half miles of territory and two hundred millions of people is one which must either give way at no distant date before the rapid stride of moral advancement, or be permanently established on principles of conciliation and justice. The latter is the policy which now marks the administration of Indian affairs. In so broad a field and with so great a population, more time and further progress are required to make much impression on the condition of the masses. The labourers among the village communities of northern and central India, and the ryots of the southern and western districts, have begun indeed to realize the value of British skill and capital as applied to railways, roads, works of reclamation or irrigation, improvements in the tenure of land; and, with the increasing yield of each successive harvest, to find a corresponding advance in the value of their scantily-rewarded toil. But while these and the legion of poor coolies engaged in the rough work of the cities must still be contented to earn a few annas (perhaps the value of sixpence) per day, the middle and better classes, Hindoo, Mahometan, or Parsee, are now amalgamated with the European community, not only in the management of commercial and agricultural affairs, but in the official administration of British rule.

Great and salutary progress has recently been made in the admission of natives to a share of the honours at the disposal of the Crown. In the lists of 'Honorary Magistrates,' Muni-

cial Commissioners, 'Civil Service,' and 'Bench of the High Court,' as well as those of the banking and financial associations, medical colleges, or charitable and educational institutions, which now abound in Bombay and the other capitals—in all, indeed, that signalizes the associated wealth and intelligence of the three Presidencies, we find such names as the 'Honorable Munguldass Nathoobhoy,' 'Meer Hoomayon Jah Bahadoor,' and 'Nuwab Mahomed Kull Ali Khan,' or 'Doctor Atmaram Pandoorung, G.G.M.C.,' 'Mr. Ardaseer Framjees Moos,' and 'Ram Chunder Mitter, Esquire,' mingled with the familiar Macintosh, Gladstone, Crum, and Brown. An example of the constitution of the 'Star of India,' an order which was instituted in 1861 and enlarged in 1866 for the like wholesome purpose of identifying native with British feelings and interests, appears in the names of the Rajah Dinker Rao and 'His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore,' being set forth respectively as Knight Commander and Knight Grand Commander on the same rolls with those of Lieutenant-General Sir Robert Napier, K.C.B., and Sir Richard Temple; while the Dewan Cheboo Lama and Baboo Prosunno Coomar Tagore figure as 'Companions' side by side with K. Williams and John Fleming.

This *companionship* is undoubtedly the best foundation on which to build the fabric of our power in India, and philanthropy itself invokes a blessing on the new bond of union. Meanwhile we cannot doubt the *bonâ fide* character of this association of the races in matters public so long as the Indian press abounds with such daily items of news as that 'Baboo Rajendra Lala Mittra,' in an address delivered at Calcutta

before the British Indian Association, and 'Mr. Narayen Wassooden,' from his place as a member of the Bombay municipality, had just been taking their respective governments to task on the score of ignorance and illiberality !

Of the growth and magnitude of the *Indian Press*, we only know, in the absence of general statistics, that the whole country is flooded with newspapers, and with the other usual forms of popular reading, written in a variety of languages, European and Oriental. The authority, however, from which I have already quoted, contains the following list of 'publications' pertaining to Bombay in 1868, which may be regarded as throwing some light on the subject :—

English, Daily	Portugese, Weekly	2
Weekly	Monthly	1
Bi-monthly	Guzerati, Daily	3
Monthly	Tri-weekly	2
Quarterly	Bi-weekly	2
Half-yearly	Weekly	5
Annually	Monthly	4
Occasionally	Mahrathi, Weekly	2
English and Guzerati, Weekly	Monthly	1
" Mahrathi, "	Hindostanee, Weekly	2
Bi-monthly	Total Publications	60

But further, in proof that the Indian press, of which we have here a good example, is as free in scope as it is varied in character, we find periodicals with such titles as '*Bombay Sum-machar*,' and '*Rouzat-ool Ekhbar*,' raising their voices in the social and political medley as imperiously as those of the '*Times of India*,' or the '*Bombay Gazette*.'

I have read in some story book of a certain sorcerer, called Cornelius Agrippa, who had constructed a magic mirror, in which, as he stood before it and waved his wand, the events of

the past were successively depicted in the order of retrogression. Thus traced from the standpoint of to-day, what scenes can we recall from the lives of nations more sparkling than the series of rapidly-dissolving views that make up the tale of Indian history? Of this nature are the incidents of the late Mutiny, in which the 'last of the Moguls' had his part, and of the Burmese, Afghanistan, and Punjab wars, still fresh (as are the names of the chief actors) in the recollection of the country. Behind these follow, in swift succession, such tragedies as the bold but fruitless incursions of the Pindarees, the Nepaul campaign, our own struggles for power with the Mahratta chiefs, Scindia and Holkar, the exciting events of Seringapatam, terminating with the overthrow of Tippoo Sahib (whose dynasty was the most vigorous that had sprung from the decline of the Mogul empire), and the many other dramatic passages which carry us back to the dawn of the present century. A host of illustrious names, too, among them those of Lord Wellesley, the Marquis of Hastings, Earl Dalhousie, Lord Canning, Sir Charles Napier, Lord Gough, Lord Clyde, Havelock, and the two Lawrences, are associated with that short but stirring period.

The subjugation in the south of Hyder Ali and his predatory bands, and the war with the Rohilla tribe, from the mountains between India and Persia, recall the times of Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General, and of Lord Clive, who landed in 1765, with full powers as Commander-in-Chief and Governor of Bengal. It was in 1748 that the East India Company fully assumed the position of a military and political power—a position which was greatly favoured by the then effete condition of the Mogul empire, and acquired a free field of

action on the defeat of the French forces in 1761. It is some consolation to know that all those chiefs and potentates, with whom Britain was thus engaged in the struggle for supremacy, were themselves invaders, seeking to found a State on the ruins of Delhi.

Through a period marked by the rise of the Mahratta power, a conflict between the English and Portuguese fleets, and the mission of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of Delhi, whereby important commercial privileges were secured to the East India Company, we arrive at the establishment of that association in the first year of the seventeenth century, as a result of the exploits of Drake, Cavendish, and Stephens, in navigating the route to India by the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn.

About the same time, the Dutch obtained a footing in the country, by the formation of a similar company, both institutions wisely eschewing the evil example of the Portuguese, who, for a century past, or ever since the expedition of Vasco de Gama in 1498, had monopolized nearly the whole foreign commerce of the East Indies, and were now rapidly losing their ground through the political tyranny and religious bigotry of their rule. That century was the golden age of Portugal. It was also the golden age of imperial pomp and power in India — the period of the greatest Mogul dominion, when such autocrats as Baber and Akbar dictated from jewelled thrones in Delhi to tributary princes of their own appointment, and when the nations of Europe were roused into eager cupidity by the wonderful accounts that came across the sea of the wealth and grandeur of Hindostan.

Baber himself, it will be recollected, was but a usurper from

Tartary, although the founder of the renewed Mogul dynasty, and perhaps the greatest and best of the Mahometan rulers of Delhi.

For 300 years before his time, from about the end of the twelfth century, when Shahab-u-din penetrated the country as far as Benares, reduced Delhi, and first firmly planted the religion of Mahomet in the heart of India, we have the period of the Afghan or Patan sovereigns — a time of frightful turbulence and massacre, exhibiting little else than a spectacle of rival chiefs, among whom Tamerlane and Genghiz Khan occupy the foreground, fighting like wild beasts for possession of the land. The career of Shahab rendered him a worthy successor of that Mahmood, Sultan of Ghuznee, who, about the year 1000, instigated at once by love of conquest and religious zeal, made fierce war against the heathen gods, defacing their grim images, and despoiling their holy temples from the Ganges to the Nerbudda, an outrage from which the gods of course rose like giants refreshed, as they will doubtless do again in the case of any similar aggression.

An interval, during which we find the avarice and ambition of Syrians, Arabians, Egyptians, and Persians, roused into action, fair or foul, by the fame of Indian wealth, introduces the time when the country supplied the luxuries of Greek and Roman hospitality, and thus we reach the famous invasion of Alexander the Great.

If half the tale that remains of that expedition be true, royal indeed was the progress of the Macedonian king, and proud must have been Lagus, Nearchus, and Aristobulus, the three officers who were deputed to journalize the order of events, in recording

for the admiration of friends at home, and of posterity at large, how they sailed the Indus for a course of not less than a thousand miles, receiving homage from nations on both sides; how they first conquered the kingdom of Porus, containing no fewer than 2,000 towns; and then, on the banks of the Ganges, subdued the king of the Prasii, with all his assembled army, comprising 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 armed chariots, and a host of trained elephants!

Different opinions now exist as to whether Palibrotha, the capital of the kingdom of the Prasii, was the modern Allahabad, or Patna.

Prior to the invasion of Alexander, we read of the expedition of Darius Hystaspes, soon after the destruction of the Babylonian empire by the Persians, and behind that event looms a dim background of unauthentic history, peopled with adventurous Egyptians, Arabs, and Phœnicians, bringing home spices, perfumes, cinnamon, and cassia, by the Persian Gulf, up the Euphrates, and across the Syrian desert. Among the thousand conjectures which pertain to this early period of Indian history, it is supposed that the spices which the company of Ishmaelites mentioned in the Book of Genesis brought into Egypt, were procured in India, as were the 'ivory, apes, and peacocks,' which, as we are told in the First Book of Kings, ships brought to Ophir—a supposed emporium of trade with India on the Arabian coast.

CHAPTER XII.

ASIATIC CREEDS: HINDOOISM.

Lo! the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
 Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind.

* * * * *

Chaos of thought and passion, all confus'd.—*Essay on Man.*



PLACING next at the religion proper of the people of India, the foregoing brief *résumé* of historical events will serve to explain the reason of the Mussulman creed being, although so different from the Hindoo in its primary constitution, to some extent assimilated in practice with the mythology of the country. Of the Brahminical fasts and festivals, it may be sufficient to say that they are so multi-form and involved, that it would require a large volume to describe them. They are thus constantly interfering with the practical business of life, and are indeed held of infinitely greater moment. The observance of holy days is enjoined as of primary importance in the ancient sacred writings called the Four Books of the Vedas, whence the rites and ceremonies, the science of theology, the philosophy of metaphysics, the principles of divination, and the whole order of moral and religious duties pertaining to the Brahminical religion are derived. But the essence

of that extraordinary faith is expounded in the Shastres, which may be regarded as a commentary on the Vedas. The doctrine of the Shastres points to one Supreme Being, or Good God, variously known as Bhogabou, Esher, and Khodah, the originator of three great powers or deities—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer of all things—under whom live and rule the vast multitude (reckoned to exceed 300,000,000) of the inferior gods and goddesses which constitute the Hindoo Pantheon, and represent in their imputed characters every phase of human vice and virtue.

In the fact that Shiva is a more general object of worship than the other two members of the *trimurti*, and that the temples bearing his name preponderate in grandeur as well as number throughout the country, we have an example of the triumph of human frailty in the East over all the good maxims of the heathen gods. Vishnu is, doubtless, a more lovable character than Shiva, and beautiful is the function he fulfils; but the other has power to ruin and destroy, and so the poor Hindoo stoops low to Shiva, for the same reason that some sects of Chinamen worship the Devil, saying, 'God is good and will not harm us, what need to worship *Him* ?'

With an irrepressible relish for the mystic and wonderful, the Hindoo masses have continued throughout all their vicissitudes rooted in a reverential regard for the Vedas and Shastres. They even venerate the most preposterous stories detailed in the traditions of their bards. Taking the very introduction of the subject as an example of these writings, we are informed that the country, many thousands of years ago, was divided between two ruling powers, called the 'families of the sun and moon,'

both originally descended from Brahma; and as the eventful story of their career proceeds, it is enlivened by such actors as Ravana, a giant with ten heads, and Sugriva and Hanuman who were at once great kings and large monkeys! The single fact (afterwards enlarged upon) that at this hour there is a temple in Benares which swarms with live monkeys, reputed to be the lineal descendants of Hanuman, affords some idea of the monstrous character of the Hindoo faith.

On such a basis rests the whole structure of that system of belief which now moulds the habits of the people and guides the routine of family life in India under the rule of England as it did in the days of the Persian invasion. What a contrast does the history of our own country present to this condition of stagnation! Druidism and its priests with their charmed circles and sacred trees—Odin, the 'chief of the gods,' with his terrible son Thor, as worshipped by the early Saxons, and the dark rites of the Heptarchy—have all passed away like a dream, while the wild fancies of the Ramayana, more ancient than them all, are still devoutly cherished by the people of Hindostan.

Looking at the deities themselves, we can perceive that they are by no means a very peculiar race of potentates, being only somewhat more erratic in disposition and unattractive in appearance than those Western brethren of theirs who once held sway in Greece and Rome. It may, indeed, be said that Hindooism, in its later developments, bears a close resemblance to our classic mythology. Jupiter, Juno, Athena, Venus, Mercury, Apollo, Hermes, Cyrene, Cupid, Pan—the members of the whole Olympic conclave had each a history, reputed attributes

and heavenly affinities more or less resembling those ascribed to the Hindoo gods—to Brahma, Ram, Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, Marvoti, Devo, Khundoba, or Juggernaut. The dominion of the European order of divinities has naturally collapsed, while that of the Asiatic, as naturally perhaps, still lingers on earth. While, then, we are accustomed to look with habitual indifference on the marble figures of the classical deities in the galleries of Dresden or Paris, need we start with amazement from the grim idol groupings displayed within the murky temples of Bombay or Benares? It would appear that the time is at length approaching when the latter also, in their capacity of worshipful objects, will take their place for ever among the shadows of the past. As matters stand, however, and monstrous as the system is, it would be wrong to conclude that the highpriests and apostles of Brahminism openly claim for their images the attribute of supernatural powers, although evidence is not wanting to show that the poor and ignorant crowd are tacitly permitted, or more likely secretly encouraged, to adopt that conclusion. We may reasonably suppose too that the more intelligent of the Brahmins cannot cherish in their hearts any belief in the faith they profess, but regarding it as the worldly inheritance of their order, or, it may be, reasoning with their scruples as the Egyptian sorcerer in the 'Last Days of Pompeii' did with those of the young priest of Isis, plume themselves on the exercise of a useful office, in which blue-fire and mysterious trumpet-tones are made to subdue the passions and arrest the wickedness of mankind.

But, in any case, it is desirable to know that these cultivated Brahmins, together with many of their educated followers among

the people, complain before the civilized world of being unjustly charged with polytheism in the face of sacred writings which contain the real confession of their faith, to the effect that there is only one God, manifested in three persons, after the manner thus translated by an English author from the language of their own poet Kalidasa :—

In those Three Persons the One God was shown,
Each First in place, each Last—not one alone ;
Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be
First, Second, Third, among the Blessed Three.

Observe now the language of a Hindoo orator who recently delivered a lecture on this subject in Benares :—

‘ If by idolatry is meant a system of worship which confines our ideas of the Deity to a mere image of wood or stone, we abhor and disclaim idolatry ; but if, while we firmly believe in the power of God, we behold by the aid of our imaginations any of His glorious manifestations in the form of an image, ought we to be charged with identifying them with the matter of the image, while, during these moments of sincere devotion, we do not even think of the matter ? ’

Then as to the position assumed by another class of native theologians on the abstract merits of the religious question, let us hear Mr. Jodoo Nath Chuckerbutty addressing himself to the people of Calcutta in the year 1869, through the medium of ‘ The Friend of India ’ :—

Missionaries and Missionaries.

SIR,—The Editor of the ‘ Indian Mirror ’ has been misinformed that two of the Missionaries of the Brahma Somaj have left the good work

of propagating Brahmoism. Being one of the missionaries in question, I think it meet to make a full disclosure of the circumstances.

Since the day I was initiated in the holy truths of Brahmoism, it has been my pleasant duty, weak and sinful as I am, to spread the sweet tidings of God's loving kindness wherever I went. I have since considered myself a missionary or servant of God, as all men who serve Him and His children virtually are, and have tried to live myself and persuade my brethren to live the soul-saving truths of the religion of one God. Thus I worked on, though I had secular duties besides to attend to. For the last few years I left secular employment and depended upon the mission fund of the Brahmo Somaj, in its progressive section, for my earthly wants, in order that I may devote my whole time and energies to the cause of Brahmoism. I am thankful to my gracious Heavenly Father for the numerous blessings He has poured upon my head during these latter days of my connection with the mission, and I express my unqualified obligation to my brethren who helped me both in physical and spiritual matters. I have, however, now bethought myself, for more reasons than one, to dis sever my pecuniary relation from the Somaj, the objects and motives that have guided my life hitherto not being affected thereby. I do still embrace the holy cause of propagating God's saving truths with my whole heart. As, owing to the unformed state of our society, it is anything but prudent to depend upon public charities for our physical wants, and as it is anything but conformable to the will of God to forego the necessity of ministering to the physical, not to say the intellectual and spiritual wants of those who depend on us; I believe it to be my duty to labour for bread with the sweat of the brow.

In Christian and other communities none but those who take mission-money are popularly called missionaries; such is happily not the case with us. It is not binding on a Brahmo missionary to receive mission-money as one receives the money of his office master, it is not also binding upon him to live upon public charities. He may adopt this course or he may labour for himself. We despise such Church government, and we are earnestly on the guard that no such idea creep into our community. Unlike Christian missionaries, our missionaries take

upon themselves the holy burthen of the mission, no one making them missionaries and no one unmaking them, God helping. Yours truly,

JODOO NATH CHUCKERBUTTY,

Missionary of the B. S.

16th January.

Unhappy as we may consider the delusions which such men cherish, it would be plainly unfair to charge their religious profession, such as it is, with the crass superstition which prevails among the more ignorant of their countrymen.

From this tendency to perversion a purer religion and a higher civilization do not protect the Western world, as witness the prevalence of palmistry and witchcraft in some of the rural districts of our own country ; the winking virgins, charmed relics, and other miracles periodically reported from France and Spain ; not to speak of such yearly-recurring spectacles as those of Florence and Naples, where in crowded churches thousands of Christian peasantry watch, with a full persuasion of their own welfare being concerned in the result, whether the blood of St. Januarius will liquefy in the revolving reliquary on the altar, or the 'Fiery Dove' will make a good ascent on the apparatus provided for its flight.

Hindoo orators, however, cannot disprove the statement that the creed they profess to believe sustains some of the silliest fancies of ancient mythology, such as the worship of so-called sacred rivers, plants, and animals, among which the Ganges, the cow or bull, and the lotus (a beautiful water-lily), are familiar objects.

But we have one great difficulty with which to grapple—that not a few active spirits among the Brahminical teachers of the

people having made themselves conversant with our Scriptures, are in the habit of attempting to ridicule some of the sacred truths they inculcate. Nor can it reasonably be regarded as a matter of surprise that in this effort, however impious and vain it may seem to us, such Brahmins should succeed to a large extent in securing the sympathies of a native audience, whose natural instructors they are. So also is it with the Parsee and Mahometan classes. I remember, while passing a court open to one of the streets of Bombay, being arrested by the appearance within of a little knot of people gathered round an individual addressing them from an impromptu platform. The speaker, an earnest young Christian missionary, was discoursing at that moment on the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, to an audience which included Parsees and other natives, some of whom were demonstrative in their expressions of dissent. He resolutely proceeded, however, to illustrate his subject by appealing to the experience of the objectors themselves, each of whom it was urged must feel himself to be a compound of body, soul, and spirit, and thus a living example of the reality of that faith which they were ignorantly disposed to deride. Yet deride it they did—not, I must add, with any display of animosity, but in a jestful spirit—two stout fellows near me making merry eyes to each other beneath their turbans. One of these jocularly struck an inflated attitude of surprise, and with outspread arms, staring eyes, and puckered brow requested the other ‘just to look at him and say whether he was one man or three!’

If there be those who would screen such a scene as being offensive to the Christian eye, I take leave to differ from them.

This was no doubt a chance *rencontre* in circumstances where the usual inducements to reticence were wanting. But such incidents bring us face to face with the true aspect of religious life, and with the nature of that spiritual desert in which the banner of our faith is unfurled. They at least serve to prove that the foundations of the vast moral regeneration here sought to be effected must be laid deep and wide. Education, as it spreads, will assist in preparing the native mind for the reception of divine truth; and there are some who think that, even now, a more general diffusion of friendly intercourse with the people, accompanying the publication of gospel precepts, would strengthen the efforts of those who are engaged in the good work of Christianizing India.

In Scotland, at least, much interest attaches to the recent eastern mission of the Rev. Drs. Macleod and Watson, as having assisted to shed the light of truth upon the more practical features of the question.

In the meantime, it seems important to notice that this subject is not simply of an abstract religious character, but one claiming the thoughtful consideration of all Englishmen who feel any interest in the welfare of Hindostan. No one, indeed, can fail to perceive that it possesses—apart from that more sacred aspect which it is the province of the pulpit to reveal—a direct bearing on the legislative system. Hindooism, the indigenous faith of the country, has not only served hitherto to enslave the popular mind, but is, in its very essence, antagonistic to the civilizing policy of British rule. Nor does our colonizing experience in Asia tend to invalidate the statement of Burke, regarded as a general truth, that ‘Religion is the basis of civil society.’

CHAPTER XIII.

ASIATIC CREEDS: BUDDHISM.

Clown. What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wildfowl?

Malvolio. That the soul of our grandam might haply inhabit a bird.

Clown. What thinkest thou of his opinion?

Malvolio. I think nobly of the soul and no way approve his opinion.

Twelfth Night.

To be no more, sad cure, for who would lose,
Though full of pain this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
To perish; rather swallowed up and lost
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion.—MILTON.



CONCERNING the Mahommedan population in India, I have already alluded to the fact, that the faith they profess in common with their brethren of Turkey or Egypt has become mixed up with the ceremonies of the Hindoo religion.

Here, therefore, it forms a mass of complications only inferior to the latter system.

There is, however, another ancient creed—that of the Buddhists—which once was paramount in India, and still lingers there like a shadow of the olden time. It is now confined to the peninsula beyond the Ganges and the table-land north of the Himalayas, together with Ceylon and some of the islands of the Indian Archipelago; but its temples yet exist in great numbers throughout the country, each with its *dagoba*, or conical structure

containing some relic of Buddha, if not an actual image of the saint.

The Buddhists acknowledge the earlier existence of Brahminism, and a fundamental point of difference between the two creeds is that whereas the gods of the latter, such as Rama or Krishna, are regarded as *avatara*, or incarnations of the Deity, the Sakyasinka of the former (afterwards called Buddha, or the sage) is worshipped as a mortal man who attained the highest glory after death; his life of great sanctity on earth, being sufficient for that end in a single transition, without the intervention of those Pythagorean transmigrations of the soul which, according to this doctrine, await other men after their decease. But from that common platform of agreement the different sects that bow the knee to Buddha stray apart from one another in a dark labyrinth of fancies, into which any attempt to follow them were a waste of time. Conspicuous, however, in this region of gloom and mysticism are the chimeras of an external universe, which has no material existence, being only a transient manifestation of the Divine Being, and of a heaven, whose ultimate good and most glorious recompense is a state of utter annihilation!

And when Buddhist theology tells us by way of explanation that this annihilation means the absorption of the individual man into nobler pre-existing elements—his return, so to speak, into the bosom of the all-pervading creative power, whence he originally sprung—we feel scarcely wiser for the information. We are still left to wonder that the human mind should find any comfort or attraction in a system of belief so vague and empty, and that, although long decadent in some parts of India, this should still be the religion of a considerable section of the Eastern world.

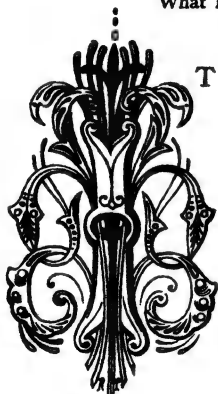
CHAPTER XIV.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND TERRITORIAL.

To him, who in the love of nature holds
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
A various language.—BRYANT.

It is a goodly thing to see
What heaven hath done for this delicious land.

Childe Harold.



IT WAS by an Act passed in 1858 that all the territories formerly under the sway of the East India Company were vested in the Queen of England, and the teeming millions of India became our adopted countrymen.

The present plan of the Indian Government is comprised in the following order of arrangements :—

A Viceroy, or Governor-General, sitting at the head of a Supreme Council in Calcutta.

A Governor of Madras.

A Governor of Bombay.

A Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.

A Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Provinces.

A Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

- A Chief Commissioner for the Central Provinces ;
- A Chief Commissioner for the Province of Oude ; and
- A Chief Commissioner for British Burmah.

Then follow, rank and file, the various members of the Covenanted Civil Service, over which the above functionaries preside, altogether numbering about 900 in the three Presidencies. This small, but compact, governing body is entirely composed of Europeans, educated for the purpose in this country. It is, however, supplemented by the Uncovenanted Civil Service, the members of which receive their appointments from the proper authorities in India, and consist of Europeans, Eurasians (that class in which the blood of the two countries is combined), and natives of India. In the list of 'Principal Uncovenanted Servants,' for example, given by the 'Bengal Directory' this year, we find 329 European and 320 native names. This class fulfil the duties of magistrates, collectors, &c., for which they must be well qualified, through the necessary curriculum of studies. On the occasion of the last Civil Service examination at Calcutta, in June 1869, Baboo Romesh Chunder Dutt obtained the second place in English literature, while other natives distinguished themselves in mathematics, Latin, Greek, and natural science. The salaries of the 'Uncovenanted' range from a few pounds up to 3,000*l.* a year, and the legislature has here opened up a tempting sphere of encouragement to native culture and emulation, whatever may be said of its advantages to our own countrymen. Yet the people of India at large do not seem to be satisfied with the liberality of this arrangement. For example, an Armenian, in a letter addressed to the editor of the 'Calcutta Englishman,'

after speaking of the pre-eminent loyalty and intelligence of his class, concludes thus :—

It is difficult to conceive, therefore, the ground on which the exclusion of Armenians from the public service can be maintained.

I have yet to learn that the selection from among subjects of the Crown of men for the service of the State should rest on any other basis than merit and administrative capacity, or that such selection should in any way be regulated by birth or complexion. The primary object to be attained is, I apprehend, good government; and wherever you find the most capable men, be they English, Armenian, Eurasian or native, it will not be disputed that the public interests demand their selection.

Until such time as this principle is recognized—and I rejoice to know that day by day it is becoming more generally recognized—so long will mediocrity and incapacity take the place of real ability, and so long will the public good, to a corresponding degree, suffer.

As a British subject, and as one the security of whose property depends absolutely on the stability and good government of this country, as a citizen amenable to its laws, and as a taxpayer, I must protest against the illiberal and selfish views of those who would exclude me and mine from participation in the conduct of public affairs, and I earnestly hope that we have heard the last of the bigotry and narrow-minded injustice which, as it appears to me, have found fitting advocacy in the obscure journal in whose columns the article under notice at first appeared.

AN ARMENIAN.

Calcutta, May 31, 1869.

As regards the Civil Service proper, in which the general administration of the country is vested, a few words will suffice to indicate the character of the system. Successful candidates are obliged to prosecute their studies at home for two years, receiving as compensation a small alimentary pay; and thereafter, on reaching India, are transferred to appointments, of which the emoluments may be said to range from about 350*l.* to

700*l.* per annum ; situations yielding 900*l.* to 1,200*l.* annually being open to them after the lapse of four years. Men of eight years' standing may obtain posts with salaries reaching to 2,000*l.*, after having filled which satisfactorily, they are supposed to belong to the senior branch of the service, and to be qualified for the higher grades of office, from that of collector, commissioner, or judge, with from 2,500*l.* to 4,000*l.*, to a seat at the Council Board, which is worth from 6,000*l.* to 8,000*l.* a-year. For the invalided who resign, a small annuity, on a scale graduated according to the period of employment, is provided ; and twenty-two years' service in India is rewarded with a retiring annuity of from 800*l.* to 1,000*l.* per annum, derived partly from the subscriptions of the service, and partly from the contributions of the Government. These emoluments will appear by no means high when we consider the extensive legal and linguistic knowledge required of every young civilian, and the fact that he goes to his task—doomed, it may be, to some Mofussil solitude—in a debilitating climate, where, as regards the requisites of life compared with this country, the 'rupee stands for the shilling.' It is a fact familiar to those acquainted with the service, that few civilians contrive to save enough in six or seven years for the purpose of enabling them to take their furlough home and return free from debt. But prior to obtaining a situation in the Indian Civil service, such as it is, the candidate has to encounter the possibility of breaking down under the rigid examination to which he is subjected, and, as a necessary consequence, of being returned on the hands of his friends. It cannot with propriety be said, therefore, that the Indian Government is the munificent patron of young gentle-

men who possess sufficient family influence to get under its wing, or that it affords too attractive an opening to the educated youth of this country.

There are those who would deny to this noble service, in forgetfulness of its imperial claims, a reasonable participation in the progressive advantages of the age. Such a feeling, however, may be deprecated as alike dangerous and unjust. This is the force which, conjoined with a military organization, equally small in view of the work to be accomplished, and not more liberally rewarded, saved India more than once in her hour of peril, and which must be looked to again on each recurring emergency. At present it offers to the neophyte no great inducements; let us not adopt a policy that would even risk any reduction in the standard of its efficiency.

The *heat* (of which so much is said in these pages) prevailing in different parts of the country may be estimated from a calculation which shows that, while the mean annual temperature in London is $49^{\circ}35'$, it is in Bombay $81^{\circ}9'$, in Madras $84^{\circ}4'$, and in Calcutta $79^{\circ}37'$.

Those periodical winds, called *monsoons*, by which the *climate* is regulated, are far from being short and fitful in their action, like the breezes which sweep our northern island—one blowing from the north-east from October till March, and the other from the south-west from April till September. The former, however, is mild and partial in its influence compared with the latter, which not only blows with greater intensity, but brings with it the rain-clouds which fertilize the whole of India, excepting a portion of the Coromandel coast. Territorial and other influences render impossible any precise definition of the bound

aries between the different *seasons*, called 'rainy,' 'cool,' and 'hot.' In the localities just named, the cold weather generally commences in November, and continues till March, the increasing heat being greatly relieved by storms of wind from that time till May, when the most enervating period sets in, which, together with the rains commencing in June, continues till towards the end of October, when both depart with gradually lessening intensity.

Among the more important *vegetable products* of the country are the sweet banana, the delicious mango, rice, wheat, yams, maize, barley, mustard, and other articles of food, with cotton, flax, hemp, indigo, jute, and other materials of manufacture.

Books on India have long since informed the world that the country is 'poor in minerals,' nor can it yet be said that the statement is substantially incorrect. It must be borne in mind, however, that the survey of the vast area comprised in that little word, 'India,' is only in course of progress, and, at the present rate of advancement, is not likely to be completed for ten or twelve years to come. The yearly accounts now rendered by the Survey Department furnish an enormous mass of interesting details, and the system involves an aggregate annual cost to the country of about 200,000*l*. Large coal-beds have been recently discovered where none were supposed to exist; and elsewhere geologists are directing the attention of the legislature to strata containing lead and silver, apparently in workable quantities.

Last year's 'Report on the Godavery Districts of the Central Provinces' informs Government that this portion of the country is not so valuable for its agricultural as for its mineral products,

among which are mentioned iron ore in abundance, gold in small quantities, and precious stones, such as the sapphire and the amethyst, together with very pure rock crystal.

From the Punjab comes the following intelligence :—

The Punjab Government has just granted leases of the silver and antimony mines at 'Shiqri' to the proprietor of the Kulu Mines, who has purchased the entire mineral rights of the whole of 'Vazeeri Rupi,' including the silver mines at 'Manikarri' and 'Terri' in the Parbutti Valley. This argentiferous country yields also copper, lead, and gold. Although it has undergone considerable exploration in the last twelve months, there is no doubt that discoveries will be constantly made by those who have knowledge and enterprise enough to visit this 'Silver country of Vazeers,' which covers over 600 square miles of the district of Kulu.

It is true that the rich old diamond mines of India are well-nigh exhausted, but the progress of discovery points to the possibility of greater productiveness. The few copper and iron mines at present in operation appear to be giving a satisfactory yield. It need scarcely be added that nitre and salt exist in ample store, with the prospect of an increasing supply.

Fruitful in leaf and stem, the forests and hillsides abound with trees, conspicuous among which are the teak, the universal bamboo, and an endless variety of palms.

The *zoology* of India is as rich and extensive as its botany. In the fields, and by the roadsides, travellers find the cow and buffalo, the sheep, the goat, the horse, and many other tame animals, together with the huge forms of the camel and the elephant—both of them highly serviceable for purposes of merchandise and of war also, as we have seen in the case of the Abyssinian expedition. The vulture, eagle, kite, cormorant, and

crow are conspicuous among the winged tribes. These aerial carnivora are the natural and unsalaried scavengers of the land, unweariedly searching even on barren ground for the means of subsistence. In the more retired districts appear wild peacocks, paroquets, and other birds of bright plumage, glistening in the sunlight. Hideous alligators and snakes still haunt such waters as the Indus and the Ganges, but in reduced numbers, and only in localities beyond the highways of modern traffic. And so of the savage tribes of animals—the lion, tiger, leopard, panther, and hyena—which, numerous as they still are, have been gradually receding before the steps of material progress, into the more retired jungles of the Mofussil.

The coasts and rivers afford a plentiful supply as well as a great variety of fish, which however, as a rule, are not so well-flavoured as those of colder latitudes.



CHAPTER XV.

THE PARSEES' FAITH AND SEPULTURE.

A sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.—WORDSWORTH.

How fast has brother followed brother
From sunshine to the sunless land!—*Ibid.*



THE Parsee people, as I have already stated, occupy an influential position in Bombay. They are officially computed to constitute about 50,000 of the 820,000 souls to which the population of Bombay is now believed to have risen.

This tribe claims to be the remnant of that ancient Persian race which, inheriting the power and grandeur of the old Babylonian and Assyrian empires, extended their conquests to the borders of India. They refer with pride to what they style the glory of their early history, and to the patriotic struggles through which they saved their time-honoured religion from the furious bigotry of the Mahometan conquerors of

Persia, and were enabled to rekindle its sacred fires in the land of their adoption. Strangely conservative in character, the Parsees still abide unswervingly by the two prime conditions on which they were originally permitted to settle in India; namely, to venerate the cow and not to carry arms. They are thus precluded from rendering military service to the state. In habits and character the Parsee claims more affinity with the English residents than with the followers of Brahma or Mahomet; and the better-educated adherents of Zoroaster aver that the faith taught by their prophet has nothing in common with many of the superstitious ceremonies which are enacted in its name, the latter being based on the religion of the Hindoos.

Mr. Dosabhoy Framjee, a Parsee gentleman of Bombay, in his interesting work entitled 'The Parsees; their History, Manners, Customs and Religion,' does not hesitate to rank among these so-called spurious observances even some portion of the teaching comprised in the sixteen *schlokes* or distiches—a kind of confession of faith, prepared by the priests early in the eighth century, and still adopted as a guide to the devotions of the lower orders. The *schlokes*, for example, while enunciating more reasonable forms of belief as held by Mr. Framjee and his class, enjoin a respectful regard for the cow, together with ceremonies both childish and offensive, all which are denounced by these polemicists as contrary to the 'fundamental principles of the Parsee religion.'

If such be indeed the case, the faith stands in urgent need of enlightened advocates in Bombay, where, in practice, it has become intimately allied with some of the worst features of the Hindoo and Mahometan systems, such as the seclusion

of women from society—even from 'the social board' of their lords—the betrothal and marriage of children, the use of charms, and the belief in witchcraft and astrology. The astrologer, indeed, who is summoned to cast the nativity of a child, may be a Parsee priest or a Brahmin, either being accepted as an orthodox professor of the art. But Mr. Framjee styles him in any case a 'pretender' who 'gravely delivers himself' of 'absurd stuff,' and adds, that 'the fellow' himself 'thoroughly understands the worth of his own forecastings.' Such, however, is the practice of the Parsee multitude in India.

Their place of sepulture, like that of their Persian ancestors, is the *Dokkma*, or 'Tower of Silence,' always erected at some solitary place—frequently on the mountain-top—and visible in Bombay even above the high foliage of the Palmyra palm on the peak of Malabar Hill. Here the rich landscape is crowned with four square towers, built of greystone, and surrounded by a wall of the same material. On the top is an iron grating, on which the dead, borne thither with much lamentation, are left by their friends to the silence indeed, but not to the solitude, of the grave; for, floating above in the sunlight, or perched round the edges of the building, behold a grim company of patiently-expectant kites and vultures! The body being quickly denuded of its flesh by these cormorants, the bones fall through the grating into a pit below, whence they are removed into a subterranean chamber constructed for the purpose.

Thus, while the King of Terrors consigns Christian and Mussulman to the earth, and Hindoo to the flames, he gives the Parsee to the fowls of the air; surely the most revolting end of all. It is said in Bombay, that mourning friends are in the

habit of standing aside to see the birds begin their loathsome work, and regard it as a good omen for the deceased, in the new life on which he has entered, if the right eye be devoured before the left !

The earthly kingdom of the Parsee then, like that of the Hindoo, contains no 'God's acre,' or 'city of the dead,' nor can his family affections or sense of patriotism be stirred by any appeal to the 'graves of his sires.'

Historically speaking, it appears that the era of Zoroaster, the apostle and prophet of the Parsee faith, is involved in some obscurity, but the tribe claim for the Zend Avesta, or sacred books which contain the religious principles, as well as the excellent system of morals connected with his name, an antiquity of not less than 2,500 years. The Avesta comprise twenty-one volumes, written in the Zend, which is held to be one of the most ancient of languages, and the belief they inculcate is, as Mr. Framjee tells us, the existence of 'one God, the Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of the universe, *without form and invisible.*' Such is Ormuzd, the fountain of love and mercy, that 'immense light from which all glory, bounty, and goodness flow.' Being thus regarded as the 'emblem of glory, refulgence, and light,' he is worshipped under the symbol of fire, and is especially manifested to human eyes in the splendour of the sun, as being the 'perfectest fire, and causing the perfectest light.'

There are, or lately were, three Fire Temples for Parsee worship in Bombay, one of them erected, by a single individual of the order, at an expense of about 25,000*l.* In these temples, the sacred fires are kept continually alive, and before them public worship is daily offered to the great Source of Light,

private devotions being similarly conducted by the faithful in the presence of lesser lights, kindled in their own homes.

We are here arrested by the similarity between these fire temples and those formerly dedicated by classic superstition to the service of Vesta, which were presided over by Patrician maidens, whose office was so strictly supervised that failure to maintain the mystic flame entailed upon the unhappy virgin so neglecting her duties a cruel punishment of stripes. Happily no similar discipline obtains in Bombay; but the mere fact of such public and private shrines existing at the present time in Heathendom, would seem to indicate a metaphysical affinity between the ancient Roman and the Parsee of to-day.

The religion of Zoroaster, however, also teaches, with some appearance of inconsistency, the independent existence of an Evil principle, or 'author of evil,' called Ahriman, who is ever at war with the works and ways of the good God, both in the outward universe and within the human soul. But this difficulty the more enlightened professors of the creed get rid of, by contending that 'Ahriman should be taken in an allegorical sense.' They further indignantly repel the charge of being mere fire or sun worshippers, maintaining that it is only as 'proper symbols of the Almighty' that they stand before the one or turn their faces to the other. Yet it is impossible to comprehend in what sense the object of their adoration can differ from these elements of nature; what can such a deity be but the whole of the visible universe?

Such a question was the natural finale to a conversation I had on the subject with one of two Parsees who were passengers with us on the voyage out. These were wealthy

merchants of Bombay, returning thither after a business visit to England. For several successive days I had observed the elder gentleman diligently studying a book, which, to my surprise, turned out to be the 'Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.' Besides being a man of superior intelligence, he was frank and social in manner. I therefore availed myself of a favourable occasion to accost him on the subject.

'I am glad,' said I, 'to see you are reading our Bible.'

'Oh, yes,' he replied, smiling, 'I read.'

'I presume you quite understand it?'

'Oh, yes; I understand.'

These answers being more complimentary to the discernment than gratifying to the curiosity of an enquirer, a bolder question elicited the fact that he was reading the Bible precisely as curiosity might have tempted myself to read a translation of his Avesta, and not with any prospect or desire of being converted to its tenets. It was impossible to find fault with such an admission. In essaying, however, to feel my way towards a better understanding, I became suddenly aware that I had roused a sleeping lion, my friend, after a little preliminary circumlocution, broadly affirming that *Christians were 'idolaters!'* On my denial of such a charge, he pointed to the practice in Roman Catholic communities, and when I explained to him that the image or other form to which he referred was merely used as an emblem to assist the frailty of human thought, he pointed to the sun, at that moment near the horizon, saying, 'So is it with us, but there is the nobler emblem of the God we worship.' Had our interview terminated here, I might have been left in doubt whether he had not the best of the argument.

But I found, as I had anticipated, that beyond this point he failed to pursue our friendly debate with even a shadow of reason. He could not—would not—deny that the sun was *in itself*, and so far as it went, a glorious manifestation of Divinity. It was indisputably an *integral part* of the Supreme Existence he adored. Where, who, or what then is Ormuzd, Creator and Ruler of the universe, ‘without form and invisible,’ impersonal as the elements, impalpable as light itself? Such a system of belief may possess the merit of rising above all carnal sense—of being thoroughly antithetical, for example, to the material garniture and gross delights of the Mahometan paradise; yet, think of it as we may, we cannot recognise in it a living object of contemplation or worship, or find any haven of rest for the wearied wings of thought.



CHAPTER XVI.

THE NAUTCH.

These tell-tale women.—*King Richard III.*

Is it a party in a parlour?—WORDSWORTH.

Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice stroll in and out,

As if they feared the light:

But O, she dances such a way!

No sun upon an Easter-day

Is half so fine a sight.—SIR JOHN SUCKLING.



NOW resume my narrative at that point where we left the Esplanade party hurrying homewards at nightfall, in their handsome equipages.

As I have already shortly described the Englishman's home in Bombay, let us follow the cavalcade to that of one of those rich Parsee merchants who inhabit some of the finest houses in the neighbourhood. The occasion of our visit was a *nautch* party, given in our honour by Mr. N—— A——, with whom I had some business relations; and, as the *nautch* is still the popular evening entertainment of the country, and many Hindoos as well as Parsees were present, we had thus an opportunity of seeing the 'At home' of a respectable native family.

We found the preparations for our reception on a scale of

truly Oriental splendour. Not only the large two-storied mansion from all its windows, but the very compound and garden from their trees and shrubbery, projected a blaze of light into the public road, revealing, as in a picture by Rembrandt, the close-packed eager faces of a crowd of idlers, collected round the entrance-gate. Arrived at the hall-door, we were received by our host himself, surrounded by a staff of native servants, arrayed in the family livery, and at once conducted by the grand staircase to the drawing-room above—a spacious chamber or hall occupying the whole length of the building, and brilliantly illuminated with more than a hundred lamps, emitting the clear soft light peculiar to cocoa-nut oil. It was further radiant with the gaily-coloured and richly-patterned dresses of the already assembled guests, who were seated in a great circle around, presenting an imposing array of Indian shawls, turbans, and puggeries, mingled with Persian hats and silk trousers.

Here we were led to seats of honour, and presented with rose-water, flowers, and betel-nut, after which a nautch-girl was introduced, accompanied by her attendant musicians. This damsel was a young and well-favoured specimen of her class, clad in wide silk trousers, a red silk *saree* laden with silver ornaments, and a natural flower analogous to the *Gardenia* of this country (the celebrated sweet-scented *Mogra*) in her smoothly-braided hair, which, of course, was black and glistening with oil. Her small bare feet, during the brief moments of their appearance, displayed ornamental toe-rings and anklets. A profusion of rings and bracelets covered the fingers and arms; the neat little ears were burdened with large gold appendages; and last, not least, a nose-ring, inlaid with turquoise stones, dis-

figured, fine jewel though it was, the expression of a blithe comely face.

The three instrumentalists having squatted on the floor, and commingled the inharmonious strains of a triangle, a tom-tom (or small drum), and a dolorous two-stringed instrument, not unlike the banjo in appearance, the performer advanced to the centre



NAUTCH GIRLS.

of the room, and began a series of gentle movements with hands and feet, adapted to the rhythm of the dreary melody, which, combining an equal amount of spirit and variety, consisted of the continual repetition of about two bars. Presently she broke forth into song, or rather into a recitation of certain pathetic truths, during the progress of which her voice gradually rose, and her gestures increased in animation.

This nautch-girl having fulfilled her part, another appeared, and enacted a similar performance. Although older, and by no means so attractive as her predecessor, the new comer was also elaborately attired, and with expressive energy, amidst much waving of arms and other graceful evolutions, chanted the measure of a long sad tale. We were afterwards informed that hers was a thrilling story of forsaken love; hence, the greater fervour of her look and action than those of her companion, whose theme was only the mercy of God, as exhibited in the date-tree dropping its ripe fruit to the ground for the benefit of the poor, together with other similar examples of the bounty of Providence.

The third part comprised the united action of both performers; and so on, if we had chosen, *ad infinitum*, or at least throughout the night. Our party, however, had now seen enough of the *nautch*, and had even enjoyed it as a novelty, although of any amusement it may have afforded to the native guests solemnly ranged round the room, their blank faces gave no sign. So far as their deportment went, the occasion might have been rather a funeral than a festival; and it may safely be added, that they were ready, if no interruption had occurred, to sit quietly on for many hours throughout multiplied repetitions of the performance.

The fair sex (such being the rule) were not represented at this gathering, otherwise than by the performers themselves; and very unusual indeed was the honour next accorded us, of being conducted to a private apartment, and introduced to the ladies of the family—mother and two daughters—richly dressed in brodered silk robes and cashmere shawls, set off with a pro-

fusion of diamonds and other jewellery. The younger ladies, although mere juveniles, were also both married.

Hands being shaken, and salutations exchanged, the mutual entertainment consisted in silently contemplating one another, and vainly striving to disguise an unhappy sense of awkwardness; for the language of the eye is a failure in the case of people who must neither look loving nor roguish. A child



PARSEE LADY AND CHILD.

about five years old, the *wife* of a youthful member of the family, was present, while the husband himself, in a boy's dress covered with spangles, and unconscious of the dignity becoming a married man, romped about the room in companionship with two other little harlequins.

That the diamonds worn by the ladies were of considerable value, there could be no doubt. There are, indeed, few spheres of domestic life in which the world's venders of these

ornaments find better custom. Not long ago an eminent firm in Bombay had two celebrated diamonds consigned to them for sale. One, known by the name of the 'Star of the South,' was disposed of to the Guicowar—sovereign prince of Baroda—on the occasion of his marriage, for the sum of 85,000*l.*; and the other, styled the 'Dresden diamond,' at the price of 30,000*l.*, to a well-known Parsee gentleman of Bombay, who applied it to the laudable purpose of illuminating his wife's nose!



CHAPTER XVII.

TANK AND TEMPLE.

'Tis a little thing
 To give a cup of water ; yet its draught
 Of cool refreshment, drained by fever'd lips,
 May give a shock of pleasure to the frame
 More exquisite than when Nectarean juice
 Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.

THOMAS NOON TALFOURD.

And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd
 That palter with us in a double sense ;
 That keep the word of promise to our ear,
 And break it to our hope.—*Macbeth*.



N these regions of the sun, life and vegetation are supported by a system of wells and tanks, which everywhere, in town or country, form prominent features in the landscape. The wells, deep sunken like the shaft of an exhausted mine, receive the precious rain-water that the earth is permitted to draw to its bosom below the parched surface, and form an adjunct of every well-appointed house. Indian tanks vary in appearance from a small inland lake to a common pond, and serve the natives for purposes of ablution, besides affording passers-by the spectacle of an aquatic merry-making, as often as a sufficient number of nude black figures sociably disposed chance to meet in their turbid depths.

Among such a people it is only natural that some of these watery receptacles should possess mystic associations; one, for example, marking the site of a healing miracle, and another the earthly exit of a god. There is in Bombay a celebrated tank of this order, which is held, all physical impossibilities notwithstanding, to be supplied from the sacred waters of the Ganges. It occupies the centre of a holy village, called 'Walkeshwar,' nestling in a hollow of Malabar Hill, and is surrounded by temples, together with the dwellings of their priests and devotees. Here, at the door of the principal place of worship, the reputation of which renders it a temple of Eleusis in its own sphere, sat, on the occasion of our visit, one of the archpriests of Brahma. I know not to what particular order his reverence belonged, but the figure he presented in the doorway was simply that of an undraped, tangled savage of the gorilla type. He had, moreover, only one eye, which he turned on us with a glance sufficiently sparkling for a pair, as he curtly declined the request preferred through our conductor, that we should be permitted to enter the temple, in whose dungeon depths behind him we had just a glimpse of certain gods ranged in line, and rendered invitingly terrible by lamplight. At his right hand, dividing the entrance, crouched a stone figure of the sacred bull, and before him, on a small table, glittered a variety of brass conjuring implements, his stock-in-trade, with which he was prepared to cast horoscopes, and unveil the fates for the benefit of all comers willing to pay for the information.

What a strange medium this saint presented for the conveyance of that transcendent knowledge which he professed to

expound! As we instinctively turned, indeed, to take a last look of him, I could not help thinking, that if the frequent statement were true regarding the priests of Hindooism performing the Devil's work on earth, his Satanic Majesty had here a most appropriate representative, at once bearing his similitude and assuming his power.

On another occasion, while in company with the Rev. Dr. John Wilson, we sought admission to a temple reported to be under more liberal direction; but even the influence of that universally-esteemed gentleman was unavailing at the moment, the reason assigned being that one of the constantly-recurring festivals or ceremonies was then being enacted. We had thus to content ourselves with a passing glance through the doorway at the motley congregation inside, and with hearing the loud clangour of the bells, rung by successive groups on their arrival to invite the attention of the god.

The Hindoo temple, or pagoda, is everywhere conspicuous in India. Its votaries do not despise architectural magnificence. But, unlike the mosque, where Mussulmans seek to propitiate heaven from broad marble platforms, or the highest peaks of towers, anything will suffice for the Indian temple; it may be a model of beehive shape containing Liliputian idols, which are supplicated from without, or an edifice with a great inner hall, in which enormous deities are invoked by prostrate devotees.

The entrance to every complete structure is guarded by a statue of the Brahmin bull, which lies squatted in the middle, as if its duty and prerogative were to block the way—the thick walls and short peaked tower of the building itself being usually laden with carved mythological figures and other objects.

To construct and to endow (either or both) a tank or temple is a favourite object of ambition in India. The current of Hindoo piety, indeed, runs strongly in that direction: hence the large emoluments attached to so many religious edifices throughout the country, serving to maintain their priestly force and influence. Such property, of course, has always been held sacred by our Government, each building having its committee, composed of natives, chosen by the popular voice, who receive the revenue and undertake its proper application. Being open to all comers, the worship of which it is the theatre is frequently of a truly unsophisticated nature, expressing the actual desires of the heart, without any regard to the appropriate character of the sentiment.

A story on this subject is related in Bombay of the late Rev. Dr. Stevenson, long an esteemed pastor of the Church of Scotland there. While travelling with some friends in the Southern Mahratta country, he was obliged (the party being unprovided with tents) to take refuge for the night in the village temples by the way. Very early one morning, as he lay in a corner of a certain sanctuary, wrapped in his blanket, a worshipper, whom a fit of devotion had incontinently roused from slumber, entered the place, and not perceiving the recumbent form of the reverend doctor, at once fell prostrate before the deity (Ram) repeating a series of invocations which, although somewhat diffuse and rambling in their character, invariably terminated with the same urgent appeal:—‘Oh Ram, Ram, *mulla picea dhe, mulla picea dhe!*’ ‘Give me money, give me money!’

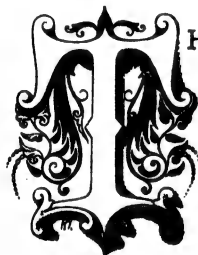
CHAPTER XVIII.

THE HEIGHTS OF KENERY.

O, waly, waly up the bank,
And waly doon the brae.—*Old song.*

. . . Monastic brotherhood, upon rock
Aerial.—WORDSWORTH.

If ancient tales say true, nor wrong these holy men.—BYRON.



THE neighbourhood of Bombay, like that of Naples, is rich in the material records of a former age. Among these the most attractive are a series of extraordinary excavations belonging to the Buddhist period, cut out of the solid rock on the island of Elephanta, and on the hill-sides of Kenery and Karli. . Although varying in extent and appearance, they are all of a similar character, those of Elephanta being naturally best known, in consequence of their greater accessibility.

Our generous host having arranged a picnic trip to Kenery, we started (a party of seven, including two ladies) in carriages from Bombay, and in about two hours reached the base of the eminence which rises with a gradual slope into the sunshine, seemingly covered throughout with a dense mass of jungle. Here, waiting our arrival, we found horses and palanquins, the latter accompanied by an ample supply of bearers, and intended

for the use of the ladies, as well as of those cavaliers who could not, or would not, encounter in the saddle the scorching heat and blinding light which on that brilliant forenoon enveloped the hill of Kenery.

The ascent, which was begun without delay, occupied nearly two hours. Through pathways winding among brushwood, over rocks and mounds, at one time buried in jungle with a grateful awning of branches, and at another exposed on open tracts of tableland, our ascending train toiled slowly on. As one of the horsemen of the party, I was at first under momentary apprehension of being deposited in some ditch or *nullah* among the many with which the way abounded. Gradually, however, I acquired confidence on observing how expert the animals were in the performance of their seemingly dangerous task, and ultimately felt quite at ease, stumbling and clattering forward through pleasant twilights of flint-paved glens and steep tracks under the dazzling sky. But our movements were provokingly protracted by the constantly-recurring necessity of waiting for our litter-borne companions, who appeared successively at the various turnings of the route, crawling upwards at irregular intervals, each enclosed in his (or her) narrow receptacle, which was borne by four coolies, and flanked by a relieving party in attendance. A goodly force of jet-black figures, wearing nothing but the simplest *dhootie*, thus sunned their symmetry that day on the slopes of Kenery, and the effect of their presence was rendered all the more impressive by the method they had of progressing in short spasmodic stages, to the melody of their voices, united in a loud jabber of encouragement. The two ladies subjected to this mode of elevation to the caves were



ROCK CAVES OF KENERY.

frequently completely isolated from one another and left alone, each with her fascinating staff of bearers—a situation which gave one of them, who had the advantage of experience, no concern whatever, and the other, to whom the situation was a novelty, so terrible a fright as to necessitate, on our return, my close attendance at the side of her palanquin during every step of the descent.

At length, turning a sharp corner, we passed suddenly out of the jungle into the hill-side, and were within the great cave—a lofty chamber eighty-eight feet long by forty in breadth. It was adorned on either side by a row of massive pillars, elaborately carved with elephants intermingled with semi-human monsters, and at the farther end appeared the well-known conical erection peculiar to Buddhist temples, which is supposed to be the depository of some memorial of the god.

Opposite one another at the entrance stood two gigantic stone figures of Buddh, each with a hand raised in the act of imparting a blessing, and graciously contemplating our pigmy proportions with great staring orbs. The other chambers (one of which, styled the 'Hall of Audience,' although not so lofty in the ceiling, has more floor space even than the great cave) are approached by means of steps cut in tortuous ways out of the rocks above, and contain many well-executed specimens of carving in sufficiently good preservation, among which images of the god sitting cross-legged on a bunch of lotus-leaves, in defiance of the law of gravitation, are most conspicuous. In the absence of such visible evidence, it might scarcely have been believed that the Buddhist monks of the tenth century fled from the exterminating sword of Mahomet to the moun-

tains, and burrowed in their sides like hunted hares. All the accommodation, however, necessary for an extensive religious community is here, including numerous stone cells or dormitories leading from the principal chambers. These bowers of rest are simply a range of black holes in the wall of a dungeon, and it may safely be averred that, taken as a whole, the appearance of the domicile is such as would unhinge the resolution of any modern anchorite. The bright warm days must have passed wearily enough with this community of heathen *religiosos*, dwelling like the elves of fable in the hollow of a hill. On returning to the principal chamber we found a welcome of higher relish than is usually to be met with in caverns awaiting us in a corner of the hall. Other attendants had now accomplished their task of bearing aloft in baskets, and laying out on pure white linen, such a repast as would have made the old monks of Kenery hilarious in their living tomb. Even to our accustomed eyes, the gleam of that gorgeous table in the wilderness, glittering with silver covers and cut crystal, seemed to light up the whole dingy den, and to make 'a sunshine in the shady place.' Here was a sumptuous banquet, suddenly spread before us, like that of the fairy tale, in apparently impossible circumstances; and as we sat in a circle around it, I for one felt disposed to conclude that a day's active exercise on foot and horseback in the strong sunshine of Bombay, with its unfailing accompaniments of heat, thirst, and hunger, could scarcely terminate more happily than with a cold collation served in a shady spot, and washed down by draughts of the very rivers of bliss, from bottles of iced champagne!

After being thus regaled, we were disposed to listen benignly

to a short address from the Rev. Dr. John Wilson, with whose presence, as I have stated, we were favoured on the occasion, and to benefit, as I trust we all did, by its eloquence and good sense. The giant figures dispensing their blessing at the door, and the uncouth human deformities clustered on the pillars of the hall, afforded, as they looked down on us, appropriate illustrations of the doctor's lecture. The scene was unique and fascinating : a celebrated master of Indian history discoursing to a select party on Buddhism, in one of the most isolated but attractive of its temples !

Outside, on a prominent pedestal, beneath the effigy of an indescribable monster, we had early observed a quarter-anna (a coin of the appearance and about the value of our farthing), an offering no doubt by means of which some pious native had sought to propitiate the Spirit of the place. It is quite probable that the donor could ill spare the sacrifice, but as the money was still there when we left, it had evidently failed to excite the natural cupidity of our attendants ; for who would sacrilegiously rob the altar ? We were rather late in setting forth on our descent, and in due time it became evident that sunset and the fast falling night would overtake us ere we reached the highway. And so it happened, as the sun neared the horizon, that the monotonous progress of this memorable journey was diversified towards its close by quite a lively commotion in our ranks. The gathering gloom in such a spot stirred the now shouting, hurrying bearers into tremendous action ; this sudden energy, however, being inspired less by a sense of duty than of terror, lest we should all become benighted victims to the rapacity of the panther and the bear.

CHAPTER XIX.

MATERAN MOUNTAIN.

. Climb with me the steep,
Nature's observatory.—KEATS.

A pleasing land of drowsyhed it was,
Of dreams that wane before the half-shut eye ;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flashing round a summer sky ;
There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures, always hovered nigh ;
But whate'er smacked of noyance, or unrest,
Was far, far off, expell'd from this delicious nest.—THOMSON.

. Verily, I think
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream.—WORDSWORTH.



UT as in the sunny East hills are made to serve the purpose of oases in the desert, there are elevations in Bombay whose tops, unlike that of Kenery, with its withered structures of a former age, are sprinkled with the dwellings of the living generation. Thither all who can afford to do so go up betimes, climbing above the heated surface of the earth into the cooling breezes of the sky. Such are the Indian *sanatoria* where the sick and weakly are accustomed to recruit their health ; where even the most robust are wont to nurse their

strength, the better to enjoy the round of social intercourse, and to eat curried *mourgay* with undiminished relish. Of these habitable mountains, Mahableshtar and Materan have proved chiefly attractive to the residents of Bombay. The former, although farther off (being a good drive beyond Poonah, which is a nine hours' railway journey from the city), has the advantage of being the favourite resort of the Government. But to villas planted on some elevation their fortunate owners are wont to repair during the hot weather, and occasionally at other times, to pass a pleasant holiday in the cooling upland air.

A visit paid to our friend's lofty retreat on Materan is an incident never to be forgotten. The run of four hours by railway from Bombay afforded us a glimpse of the magnificent mountain scenery of the vicinity, among which Materan itself was prominent in the distance, with rice-fields, palm-groves, and meadow-land spread out below. This is a mountain of trap rock, literally covered with hardy verdure; and a stranger looking up from the base to its inviting but seemingly inaccessible luxuriance, might imagine the need of some aerial appliance to convey him to the summit—a horse certainly would seem useless. But that is approached by a zig-zag pathway, in the manner by which even railways are now carried over mountains; and in our case the horse, with only the necessary addition of a palanquin and bearers for the lady, proved to be the auxiliary provided for the ascent. A lovely forenoon ride we had, by a road about seven miles in length, winding through alternate shade and sunshine, the way carpeted throughout with a strongly-reflected, infinitely-varied pattern of leaf and stem. On either hand rose a green forest wall, the shady recesses of

which, visible on the upland side, were gay with bright-coloured birds and butterflies, together with a great variety of wild flowers, and literally resonant with a loud chorus of sounds, the chirp, click, drone, and burr of the multitudinous gnats, grasshoppers and other creatures by which they were tenanted. The life-stir of this mountain forest was especially enlivened by the gambols of troops of monkeys, the young clinging to the mothers' breasts as they sprung from tree to tree, apparently in the highest enjoyment of active freedom in these congenial scenes. Here was a great hive of nature, reared on a scorching plain, teeming with many forms of animated existence, and rich in the materials of their sustenance.

Looking downwards through occasional breaks in the dense foliage that hemmed us in, we could see what seemed huge hollows in the mountain-side filled with a variety of trees — banian, acacia, tamarind, teak, palms, and many others — as closely crowded together as if they had risen from a common stem. Beautiful, yet terrible, was the aspect of that moving sea of leaves, in whose unexplored depths we knew that the tiger and the wild boar still found a home. Beyond lay the scenery of the country, gradually expanding as we ascended until we gained the top, when the whole shining panorama lay before us.

I remember seeing a lithograph illustrative of a passage in Pollock's 'Course of Time,' representing two glorified beings standing in a flood of sunshine, on the edge of a high cliff that bounded a luxuriant landscape, and receiving with outstretched arms a third figure floating up towards them from the misty regions below. These were angels on the battlements of heaven

welcoming the 'new arrived' spirit to their glorious home and companionship. Of such a scene, so far as the actors are concerned, this world supplies no parallel, but the picture of nature spread out before us at an overhanging peak of Materan Hill, to which we were at once conducted as the best point of observation, forcibly recalled that long-forgotten old print, depicting after a mundane fancy the confines of the celestial land.

From amidst the dense growth of trees and shrubbery that encircled the upper paradise to which we had climbed, we looked down on a vast level plain, sleeping like a misty stretch of dreamland in the excessive heat and light of the day. The view was bounded by a wide amphitheatre of barren hills, the well-known *Ghauts* over which the Great Indian Peninsular Railway Company were then constructing their now celebrated line, which, as a scientific project, outrivals even that of the Simmering Alps in Austria. The Bhore Ghaut Railway incline, indeed, is one of the steepest in the world, rising 1,831 feet in about 16 miles, while that of the Simmering increases only 1,325 feet in 13½ miles. So much for modern engineering in Bombay.

Here then we stood contemplating an immense mountain-girt valley filled with a luminous haze, its yellow floor of scorched grass dimly visible at the distance of 2,000 feet. The whole expanse was dotted with isolated groves of trees, mingled with rich bushy mounds, and flecked as far as vision extended with curling puffs of smoke, marking the sites of villages. At intervals a precious thread of water glanced like a line of light through the landscape, and in the midst of all, towering from the earth almost to the level of our platform, rose a

series of fantastic rocky eminences, altogether unrivalled in our experience of nature's freaks, giving the idea of enormous roughly-built columns or monuments sustaining ruined castles in the air. Evidently, however, these strange elevations could be accessible only to the kites and crows, which were then circling round them. Materan (itself, as I have said, a mountain of trap rock) is so deluged with the rains in their season that its roads become streams and its sides are washed with torrents. Will ages of this elemental ablution denude the mountain of its breadth and bloom, and are these tall, ragged crags the last remaining vestiges of some ancient Materan?

As we turned from the cliff towards our destination, the branching roads developed on either side such a labyrinth of tiny green groves and leafy ways as only the foot of familiarity could hope to thread. These paths led to the various bungalows of the inhabitants, nestling among the cover, at convenient distances, and usually so situated as to command from some point a view of the magnificent plain below. There is now a village in its own corner here, together with a post-office and a hotel; but, except in their immediate vicinity, the resident on Materan dwells in a land of silence as well as sunshine, exalted far above the earth, amidst flowery walks and dense shrubbery, in company with great humming-bees and gorgeous birds and butterflies—a truly romantic retirement, of which the western world affords no example. It is only, however, the sounds pertaining to human existence that are hushed; actual silence there is none. The whirring noise of multiform life that pervades the day is prolonged with increased vigour into the night, precisely—if I may be permitted to indulge the fancy—as if the

earth were endued with a voice, which whispered to the glorious canopy of stars, while they in turn responded, sparkling and palpitating as with a living pulse.

From our afternoon seat in front of the bungalow we could see the setting sun illumine the distant waters of Bombay harbour, ere it sank from view into the gloom of the hills beyond. But it need scarcely be added that the aspect of the departing day, although thus pre-eminently peaceful and lovely, was not therefore quiet and still; for as that crimson glory by which sunset is immediately followed in the East spread along the line of the horizon, and then faded into the fast-deepening obscurity, every plot and copse gave forth its quota of sound, as if myriads of tiny throats, sounding notes of jubilee, were exulting in the beauty of the scene.



CHAPTER XX.

MALABAR AND PALKÉ.

Such and so various are the tastes of men.—MARK AKENSIDE.

I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.—*Merchant of Venice.*



WE left Bombay for Galle in a much inferior steamer to that by which we had come—a huge, hulking craft of slow and unsteady motion. She was bound for Singapore and China, and had on board several of our fellow-passengers from Suez to Bombay, who, like ourselves, were now prosecuting the next stage of their journey. Among these were an old Indian general, who at the approach of winter had fled from what he

frequently and savagely styled the ‘*abominable*’ climate of Eng-

land ; ' B—— L——, the Hindoo convert to Christian orders, of whom I have already spoken ; and a Dutch gentleman who, with the unusual accompaniment of several youthful members of his family, was on his way to spend a few years of dreary dignity as governor of the island of Celebes.

It was now the height of the cool season, and we experienced a succession of pleasant breezes as the ship slowly skirted the long, straight line of coast between Bombay and Cape Comorin. The Malabar portion, extending to nearly 200 miles, with its flat sandy shores and shallow havens, backed by a continuous panorama of low hills and dense forests, if rather tame and monotonous as a picture, possessed some attraction in its territorial and historical associations as one of the richest and most interesting districts of India. By the banks of fine rivers and in rich valleys among the hills the natives of Malabar reside within clean, pretty villages, superior to any elsewhere in India, raising rice, pepper, and other staple products of the country. The hills themselves, flat and barren at the top, are industriously cultivated, the fertile sides being formed into terraces, and the woods so dimly visible before us were those which have long supplied valuable teak-trees for shipbuilding, together with cocoa-nut palms, yielding the oil that lights a legion of homesteads near and far.

Here also certain very ancient laws relating to property and to social habits immemorial in India continue to prevail. When the country became a British possession at the downfall of Tippoo Saib, slavery and its persecutions were abolished, but the people still retain their old caste distinctions and strange conventional rules. Among the Hindoo inhabitants are

the Namburies, or Brahmins; the Tiars, who till the soil; the Malears, magicians or conjurors, and the Patiars, or lowest class, who once were slaves. Besides these, and most remarkable of all, we find the Niars, a numerous and influential caste of the military order, next in rank to the Brahmins, and ridiculously inflated with a sense of superior dignity. Thanks to the humanizing influence of British rule, the time has gone by when a Niar felt himself impelled to avenge a supposed insult to his order by striking down with his sword the too unobservant Tiar who might, however unconsciously, obstruct his path, or the poor degraded Patiar who even by a chance touch might defile his sacred person. Divided into eleven distinctive ranks, and with only the Brahmins and Rajahs as their superiors, the Niars still exercise high authority over the people and affairs of Malabar.

The Niar marriage compact forms a unique transaction. Ludicrous to relate, the wedded wife resides not with her husband, but with her own relations. He, indeed, furnishes his bride with food and clothing, but leaves her perfect freedom of action, only stipulating that she will not choose her associates from any of the inferior ranks! And so the desired result is brought about in the form of two monstrosities—that no Niar knows his own father, and that the children of a married couple belong to the mother alone. Surely the ‘green-eyed monster’ can have no existence for the Niar of Malabar!

A glance at the map will show how provokingly tedious the voyage between the east and west coasts of the peninsula is rendered by the unnavigable condition of the Straits of Palké. By what process of nature the rocks that now block the direct

passage came to exist as we find them, it is of course beside my purpose to inquire; but, in order to show that various theories exist on the subject, I may quote the account which, according to my informant, is given in one of the epic poems of the Hindoos. The story is believed to be very ancient, of a date indeed anterior to Buddhist times, and the reason why the world is encumbered with this sea barrier is therein explained at great length, and in terms the most florid and preposterous. A few words comprising the spirit of the narrative will afford some idea of the grotesque fancies that pervade the traditions of the Brahminical faith.

To me the fable was the more interesting that I heard it from the lips of B—— L—— himself, while we were passing in view of the place, his large black eyes waggishly rolling on mine as he recounted the more salient points of an absurdity in which it was to be supposed he had once professed to believe.

Well, once upon a time, far antecedent to the puny records of Christendom, there lived a certain King of Oude, whose army was composed of a race of huge monkeys, which monkeys, notwithstanding, were creatures extremely intelligent and brave; and they are said to have engaged in combat with a nation of superlatively tall giants, who in those days inhabited the island of Ceylon. Now the giant King of Ceylon had a brother even more monstrous than himself, whose habit it was to sleep soundly for one-half the year, and awake to tremendous action during the other, his strength being as transcendent as his bulk. The monkeys, having with admirable generalship invaded the island while the invincible giant was asleep, bade fair to reduce it speedily, when, as a last resource, although

contrary to all rule, it was deemed necessary by their foes to awaken the sleeper before the proper termination of his rest. This being done, instantaneous and dire was the retribution that fell on the intruding monkeys, who were at once seized and swallowed by the angry monster in immense numbers. But, it is added, the devouring giant being possessed of good natural proportions, and his ears and nostrils therefore being of dimensions corresponding with his bodily size, the undigested victims of his fury were enabled to escape with facility as fast as they were bolted.

This great gastronomical effort to extinguish the monkey horde having thus failed, the giant resolved to destroy their general, an enormous fellow, possessed of indomitable courage, and in whom it was supposed the strength of the army lay. He was accordingly seized and bound with a number of thick ropes. Thereafter he was encased in all the rags and inflammable materials which the country could supply, and over these was poured all the cocoa-nut oil contained in all the palm-trees of the Malabar coast, which was rifled for that purpose along its whole extent. In this condition the General was set on fire, when, in the hope of saving his life, he ran blazing into the sea; but so great was the conflagration, that the waters of the Indian Ocean were for a time insufficient to quench it. At length, however, this was nearly effected, all being extinguished but the general's *tail*, which he accordingly 'took into his hands and *blew out*.' But in the act of doing this he *scorched his face into blackness*, and thus acquired a physiognomy which was transmitted to all his descendants in the direct line!

Such is the origin and family record of the black-faced or

sacred monkey, which occupies a distinguished place among Hindoo objects of worship, and which, as will afterwards appear, may be seen in great numbers swinging or squatting on the tower and walls of the filthy temple reserved for their dwelling in Benares. Such, too, is the historical page of events which, on the authority of Hindoo tradition, accounts for the existence of the rocks that deny to other vessels than small craft the passage of Palké. These, we are informed, are stones which the invading monkeys cast into the sea, being all that now remains of a bridge thus constructed by them to connect the two coasts, and by means of which they effected their celebrated invasion of Ceylon !



CHAPTER XXI.

CEYLON AND ITS STORY.

Like ships that sailed for sunny isles.—T. K. HERVEY.

The mighty Moon she sits above

She seems to shine with a sunny ray,
And the night looks like a mellow'd day.—JOHN WILSON.



T WAS on a fine breezy morning early in December that we approached the shores of Ceylon. A number of fishing-boats, with rods astern, together with *dhomies* and other strange country craft, simply rigged with square sails, were dancing about on a moderately agitated sea.

Overhead, a curtain of white and grey clouds partially shaded the dazzling blue of the sky, and rested in mingled masses on the high mountain range of the interior, among which could be distinguished the well-known eminence called Adam's Peak, ascertained by measurement to be 7,420 feet high. Below this picturesque assemblage of cloud-capped hills, a dense foliage of palm and other trees sloped to the waves, the luxuriant green shore-line thus produced being diversified, as far as our vision extended, with shining bays of sand, each white-bordered with a sparkling line of foam.

No wonder that our 'ancient mariners' hailed with a feeling of

romantic enthusiasm the appearance, as it rose and grew before them in the waters, of this luxuriant gem of the ocean, then known to them as the 'utmost Indian isle.'

The naturally inconvenient harbour of Galle has (in consequence of its exposed situation) the extra disadvantage of being always in a jumble. Fortunately, however, for the stream of voyagers which now-a-days flows in and out as regularly and almost as frequently as its tides, the town itself is a clean, pleasant place, consisting of a fort and lighthouse in the fore-ground, with well-formed streets of low-built houses, which, white-cast and bright with painted verandahs, glisten amidst a profusion of foliage; the better class, besides, being set off with trim lawns and flower-gardens.

Several of the hotels are excellent, convenient within as well as externally attractive from their surroundings; for here, and indeed wellnigh throughout Ceylon, the green earth is not withered up for long periods as on the Indian plains. A mountainous island where 'clouds drop rain,' is naturally fresh and blooming.

The shops of Galle are celebrated for their supplies of native handicraft, and are well frequented by the unceasing concourse of visitors, many of whom go on shore for the express purpose of making purchases. Boxes and figures carved in ebony or ivory, desks and cases constructed of porcupine quills, together with many other attractive articles, are there exposed for sale. The list includes a fine selection of precious stones, such as the sapphire, ruby, amethyst, cat's-eye, carbuncle, moonstone, and garnet—these jewels being chiefly imported from the Saffragan district.

Since 1863 pearls have ceased to be among the products of this island of gems, but Government has decided to renew the fishery next year. The season of diving for the oysters is limited to a few weeks in spring when the sea is calm; but the operation, while it lasts, takes the form of a gay and bustling spectacle. In harmony, however, with so much that is rich and rare, the sea banks of Ceylon yield a multiform supply of shells, equally exquisite in material and symmetry. A goodly collection of these arranged in a wooden box with divisions, which we were fortunate in obtaining from a dealer in Galle, has found more favour in the eyes of friends at home than the precious stones, gold filagrees, carved ornaments, and all else besides in our little store of Indian treasures.

In these times, with the recent extraordinary growth of eastern navigation, the life-stir of Galle has become fluctuating and changeful, like that of some great railway junction; now swelling into commotion, anon subsiding into quiescence, as the great passenger steamers (often two or three together) come and go. Its population of 3,000 includes, of course, but a small number of Europeans, for whom Galle, except in the short intervals of its spasmodic action, must be on the whole a quiet, dull place. Mrs. Hemans, in one of her popular songs, apostrophizes the 'melancholy sea,' and I imagine that our countrymen living at Galle must have learned to appreciate the relevancy of the phrase. So, at least, we thought on the single evening we spent there, while mingling with them at the day's close, in their usual saunter round the fort, which is a mile in circuit and overlooks the sea. On this promenade a score or so of solemn faces, engaged in subdued converse, looked wistfully

forth from high green ramparts in the direction of Europe, on the large bright globe of the sun, as it sank from view at the edge of a solitary expanse of ocean; or, from the circular wall which bounds the lighthouse, gazed down upon the surf that lashed the shore with a monotonous rushing sound, making melancholy music among the rocks below.

Before darkness set in we betook ourselves to the hotel in the centre of the town, where we had left our luggage. The house was chiefly remarkable for its spacious, carpetless, and scantily furnished apartments; its views of thick foliage from latticed windows; and its imperturbable landlord, large in bulk and brown in colour, whose great placid eyes no hurry or bustle around him could kindle into a responsive gleam, and whose long languid legs no appeal of worrying, beseeching guests could stir to active motion. Not that his rule was marked either by mismanagement or stagnation, but only that he was too much accustomed to such scenes, and had effectually outlived their influence.

A fresh influx of visitors scattered all over the house were engaged in rummaging boxes and portmanteaux, or making some kind of toilette, venting their impatience the while in loud calls for dinner, which was at that moment being carried in. With a large party of ladies and gentlemen, nearly all bound for distant regions of the earth, and here met together for the first and last time, we dined at an excellent *table-d'hôte*, preparatory to the next move; for although, as I have stated, we stayed one evening in Galle, we did not pass the night there. That portion of our short, precious time was not allotted to Galle and sleep, but to Mr. White and his shaky, old hooded coach,

rumbling along the road to Colombo, distant about seventy miles. Now Mr. White, as every one styled him, being both a capable and a civil driver, was quite in unison with his calling, the only discrepancy noticeable in his case being one personal to himself, as an inheritor of eastern blood, namely, that his colour flatly belied the truth and propriety of his name. As often, indeed, as he turned his smiling face in response to an interlocutor, he was ostensibly the good-natured subject of a standing joke.

We started at nightfall, and arrived at Colombo about five on the following morning. As the evening air was mild, the circumstance of the coach being an open one, with no other protection than an awning overhead, did not render the drive too exposed, while it afforded us a magnificent view of the route under the bright stellar radiance which then happened to prevail.

The road, which is uniformly good, follows the seashore, with an occasional divergence into the rich woods; and our coach, freighted with a few silent figures, rolled on towards its destination through quiet night-scenes of home-bound herds, of lamps glimmering in solitary roadside windows, and of villages whose swarthy inhabitants were dimly visible through half-closed blinds, listlessly squatted round the family fire, or preparing for the night's rest.

Isolated lights gleamed near and far in the depths of the forest to our right, each marking the luxuriant and romantic, but silent and cheerless, dwelling of a Cingalese cotter; and the universal stillness of the scene was only broken when we suddenly emerged on the seashore, where loud breakers spent their force on the sand. The ocean itself, indigo-blue in colour, was swept

by a fresh breeze, and flecked here and there with circles of spray, whence the wind brought us, at momentary intervals of quiet, the subdued sound of these distant waves lashing on the many hidden rocks, which here render navigation so dangerous, and the existence of which was thus revealed by the 'voice of the waters.' The barren shore-line of mingled sand and rock was relieved by a succession of little green promontories sustaining pine-trees, some of which, undermined by the ocean, which was slowly drawing them to its embrace, bent low over the surge as if listening to its ceaseless moan. And, finally, this grand midnight panorama of sea and land glowed in the light of an eastern full moon and cloudless canopy of stars.

It happened in our case, therefore, that a journey, which some of those who have experienced it in less favourable circumstances associate with the discomforts of darkness and a crowded jangling coach, became memorable as having afforded a charming glimpse of the isle of palms by moonlight. Nor was the course wholly without variety in the social sense, for we stopped at several places to change horses, and at one on our own account for supper. Thus, by wood and water, passing alternately from beneath the open sky into the shadow of deep foliage, rattling over the wooden bridges which span the frequent reservoirs and watercourses that here irrigate the land, Mr. White gaily blowing his horn during the darker windings of the way, and frightening shadowy figures of man and beast into the hedges as he swept along, we accomplished the run to Colombo, which was reached just at the dawn of day.

But having gone so far into the interior of the island, let us now in the merest outline trace the record of its affairs.

History affirms that the first intelligence of Ceylon was brought to Europe by two of the generals of Alexander the Great, and that the country was then to all appearance in a rich and flourishing condition. At the present day, indeed, scattered throughout the land, extensive traces exist of ancient works of irrigation, the signs of a prevalent agricultural industry. Many ruins of noble cities and sculptured monuments moreover bear testimony to the energy and enterprise of its kings.

The last of these rulers, styled Sri Wikrema Raja Singha, was deposed by the British in 1815, at the instigation of the principal chiefs, who were all highly displeased with his tyrannical sway. For a long time previously the country had been the theatre of conflicts among European powers—Portuguese, Dutch, French, and British—each fighting for the mastery.

With the Cingalese (the inhabitants proper of the island) are associated Tamils and Malabars, the descendants of invaders from the southern coast of India, and Moormen, sprung from the neighbouring islands, a comparatively trifling number of Europeans and negroes completing the population. The annals of the Cingalese professedly comprise an uninterrupted record of their history for the last twenty-four centuries; a history more stirring and eventful than might have been predicated from the present character of the people, although they enjoy better opportunities of advancement than could have been the case when their native kings monopolized the export trade. The commercial restrictions thus established, and which even the Portuguese and Dutch Governments, during their terms of supremacy, maintained with a severity that pressed cruelly on the condition of the labouring poor, were gradually re-

moved by our Government. Yet the Cingalese, as we find them, are equally destitute of the taste and capacity for mercantile pursuits, exhibiting in their persons and lives an apathy and languor analogous to the cheerless character of their religious faith. For the Cingalese are Buddhists, professing a specific form of that cold, empty creed which mingles wild fancies of spiritual transmigrations with filmy notions of the creative power and eternal existence of matter. In their religious system the highest consummation and holiest heaven is what is styled the *Nirwana*, or complete cessation of existence. Such is the condition at which it is averred the holy Buddh himself arrived at length; so that, in point of fact, the supreme object of their adoration is eternally dead; his virtues while he did exist being alone the proper theme of worship. How poor must be the influence of a faith of which the 'end all and the be all' is utter annihilation! No palm of triumph waves nor crown of glory gleams in the heaven of the poor Cingalese, to beckon him forward on his journey, or to illumine his path in life with a ray of cheerfulness or hope. Need we wonder, that while the belief he professes is replete with noble moralities (for such is undoubtedly the fact), it should have failed to awaken a holy impulse in his mind, and left him the poor, heartless, dishonest creature that he is? It must be added, however, that while this is the general character of the lower orders of the people, the higher and more independent class of Cingalese are, on the contrary, widely esteemed alike for the innate gentleness of their manners, and the virtuous practice of their lives.

On the subject of commerce, we learn that for six hundred

years after the Christian era Ceylon was the great centre of trade between Africa, India, and China, and that the Romans, making it the limit of their navigation, here exchanged their precious metals and other merchantable commodities for the silks and carved ornaments of the far East.

At the present day the trade of the island has attained to the value of about 4,400,000*l.* sterling of imports, and 3,800,000*l.* of exports, the principal items of the former being manufactures from England and rice from India, and of the latter, coffee, cinnamon, coir, and cocoa-nut oil. A large portion of the whole value of these exports is represented by the amount of coffee shipped to the United Kingdom alone. One very solid article of export is the living elephant. It is said that the annual export from Mannaar to India for some years past has averaged about 200 of these animals, the value of a single good elephant arrived at its destination being from 100*l.* to 200*l.*, and as slaughter for the mere pleasure of the act disposes of a much greater number, it is reasonably supposed that the eastern jungles of Ceylon are being fast depopulated of their huge inhabitants. The instrument employed in their capture is the lasso, dexterously thrown round their legs by a class of fearless hunters, Malays and Moormen, in whose families the dangerous calling has remained for generations.

The island, indeed, were well rid of the wild herds of elephants that forage in the less frequented parts of the interior, cumbering the earth in their uncouth march, the object of which is frequently the invasion of cultivated ground. But this is only true of the animal in its wild state; for, in addition to more familiar services as a beast of burden, it can be taught to

act as a 'builder,' an office in which it is extremely useful, moving and adjusting large stones by a curious combined exertion of the foot and trunk.

As regards the value of the pearl fishery, the revenues from 1855 to 1860, with one blank year, exceeded 117,000*l.*, the single operation which has taken place since then having realized



COOLIES ON A COFFEE ESTATE.

about 46,000*l.* For the reason already stated, the number of fishing days have only ranged from 14 to 23.

But the details of coffee planting, which may be called the chief industry of the island, present a strange alternation of speculation and panic, a chequered retrospect of reckless competition and collapsed credit, brilliant prospects and disappointed hopes. The coffee estates of this 'Garden of the East,' while supplying our country with a delightful beverage, have been

also fruitful in heavy losses and broken hearts. Succeeding the panic, which in 1847 burst in upon a golden age, came the rebellion of the following year, and, soon after, those who retained the belief that such property was of any value, purchased estates which had cost their owners 10,000*l.* and 15,000*l.*, at the modest reduction of about 95 per cent. !

It need scarcely be told, however, that this industry has again entered on a new era of prosperity, although an extended system of irrigation and a better supply of labour are requisite before sufficient security can exist from the blighting and ruinous results of recurring seasons of drought. As there is here no class of Cingalese corresponding to that of the Indian Zemindars, the work of superintendence falls entirely on European shoulders, which must needs be strong to bear the burden and heat of the roasting day on a Ceylon plantation. It may further be worthy of notice that, as the capital required to cultivate these estates is to a large extent supplied from England, they are necessarily influenced by the fluctuations and smitten by the disasters of our artificial monetary system at home.

Nevertheless, although the coffee planter's occupation here has had so disastrous a history, it has continued to grow apace. Local statistics afford information to the effect, that in 1868 there were in the whole island 34 districts, comprising 380,883 acres, in the possession of planters who had brought no less than 176,467 of that number under cultivation ; that this acreage included 1,017 separate properties, of which, however, only 894 were in operation ; and that these were superintended by 742 managers (nearly all highly paid Europeans), having under their direction at least 250,000 labourers, chiefly imported from the Indian continent.

The progress of coffee cultivation in Ceylon, as indicated by these figures, will appear by a glance at the quantity exported :

In 1852	the export was	349,109	cwt.
" 1863	" "	670,068	"
" 1868	" "	720,000	"

According to a rough estimate, the value of the whole coffee property of the island is put down roughly at 7,500,000*l.* sterling. The other 'estates' are—'Cocoa-nut,' numbering 266 ; 'Cinnamon,' 75 ; and 'Sugar,' 9. It appears, however, that the cultivation of sugar, for which the soil has been found unfavourable, is gradually becoming extinct, while that of rice is being rapidly extended, through the means now adopted by the Government of opening up the tanks with which the land was irrigated in former times. Finally, on the subject of commerce, we learn that the export duties on produce are to be entirely abolished next year—a wholesome act of legislation, which the Government of India might do well to imitate.

It should be borne in mind that Ceylon is subject to the Colonial Department of the British Government ; although, as in continental India, the administration is vested in a governor and council, at the head of a civil establishment, in which educated natives have a place.

The population of the island is supposed, in the absence of any correct census, to amount to about 2,500,000 souls, of whom 3,500 are Europeans. Its schools (716 in number) are reported to contain 26,807 scholars, towards whose education the Government contributes about 16,000*l.* a year.

Amidst all the inroads of European enterprise, Ceylon retains a fauna and flora of unparalleled richness and variety. Besides

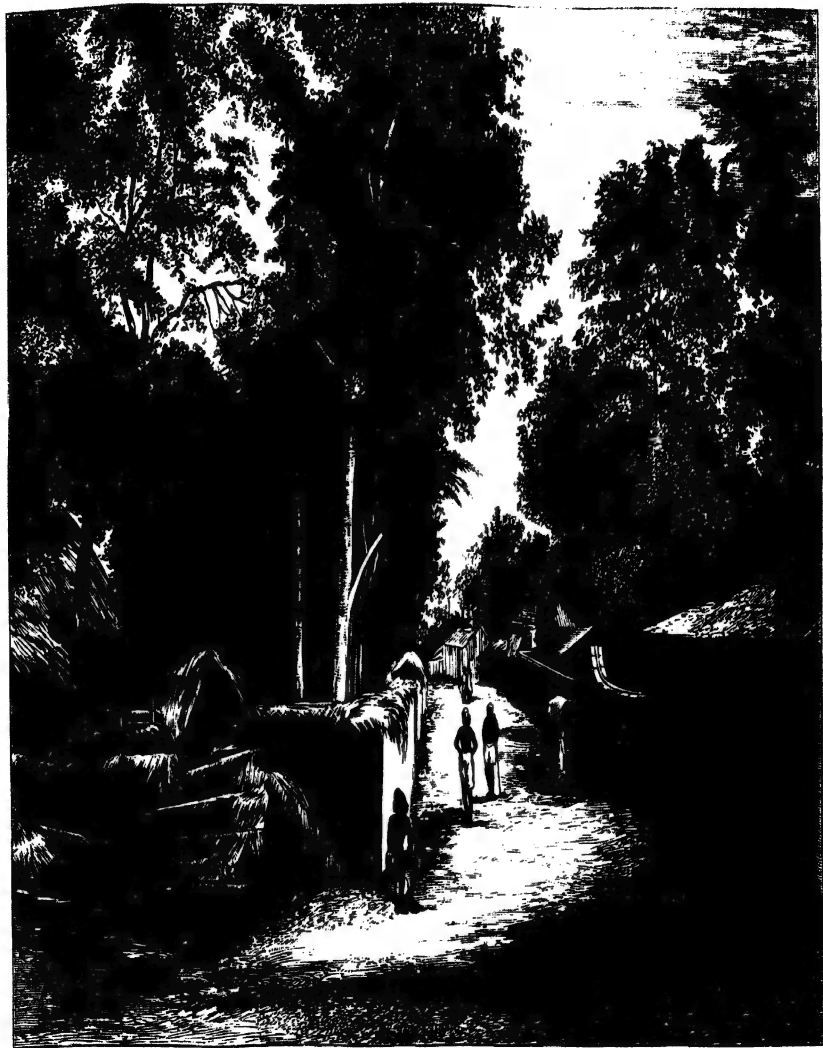
the elephant, the squirrel, bear, jackal, panther, monkey, elk, deer, and boar abound within the extensive forests, which also teem with snakes and other reptiles. Myriads of insects haunt the rank foliage, or buzz and sparkle in the sultry air. The birds, which are of great variety, and, in many cases, of magnificent plumage, include the peacock, partridge, parrot, pigeon,



TAMIL WOMEN PICKING COFFEE.

sunbird, oriole, flamingo, ortolan, cormorant, snipe, and swallow, together with the eagle and the hawk in mountainous districts. Fish of many kinds, although generally of coarse quality, are found in the bays and rivers.

The flora of the island comprises upwards of 400 varieties of trees, among which the various species of the palm everywhere



SCENE NEAR COLOMBO.

invest the landscape with luxuriant beauty. But chiefly useful to the people is the cocoa-nut tree, the several parts of which—fruit, sap, leaf, and stem—are made available for the various purposes of everyday life. This remarkable tree yields leaves for thatch, fibres for cordage, oil for lamps, sugar, milk, and the drinks called *toddy* and *arrack*; the refuse being suitable food for elephants, pigs, and poultry.

The sun had not risen when we reached Colombo, but there was sufficient light to reveal the blooming aspect of the neighbourhood called Galle Face, by which we had entered, with the villas of some of the European residents, situated, as only Eastern domiciles can be, among sheltering trees close to the seashore.

Colombo itself, a picture of white glistening bungalows, gay with painted verandahs and red-tiled roofs intermingled with large green leaves, looked, as we approached it in the soft morning light, not unlike a neat English country town where palm trees chanced to flourish; this home aspect being farther enhanced by the familiar feature of several high chimney-stacks, each with its dark wreath of smoke, indicating the sites of those factories of coffee and cocoa-nut fibre for which Colombo is famous.

The town possesses an additional attraction in the fine sheet of water surrounding it, styled 'the Lake,' on the banks of which stand some of the prettiest dwellings in the place, among them that of the friends at whose invitation we had come up from Galle. Having there refreshed ourselves with the bath, in large square chambers floored with tiles, and suitably furnished with little more than a bed carefully enclosed

with mosquito curtains, a table, a chair or two, and a basin stand, we drove forth to snatch the only observation of Colombo which our hurried visit allowed.

Having soon surveyed the suburbs, the general aspect of which I have sufficiently described, we entered the 'Fort,' a place of great strength, more than a mile in circuit, and standing on a promontory of the sea, the land approach being surrounded by a deep moat. A government house, an excellent barracks with officers' quarters, several stately edifices used as banks and civil service offices, together with a beautiful lighthouse called the 'Clock Tower,' are the more prominent objects of the 'Fort.' About a score of vessels, chiefly native craft, then occupied the little harbour, the larger ships, three or four in number, being anchored well out at sea, beyond the inhospitable rocks, over which the white spray could be seen rolling at a great distance from the shore.

Here are situated the wholesale business houses of Colombo, which at the present time number about thirty European and six native firms. The buildings consist of large open offices with store-rooms below, as in Bombay, the only points of difference in the trade system of the two places being, that the Ceylon brokers are not Cingalese (the inhabitants proper of the island), but chiefly Tamil men, speaking their own language, and that here we miss that life and energy which distinguish the larger sphere of industry.

It is computed that the entire population of Colombo, in an area of nine square miles, may, including the migrating class, 'who sleep in the street verandahs,' now be estimated at 60,000.

The native town (situated outside the Fort, and styled the

Pettah) is however the great nucleus of life, exhibiting in its unusually spacious streets all the noisy, heterogeneous features of an Eastern bazaar. Here again only a few Cingalese were visible among the merchant class, which consists principally of Moormen and Chetties from the Indian coast, but all were alike engrossed with their own affairs. The native traders on either side of the way, sitting cross-legged among bales and boxes of unpacked British manufactures, mingled with articles of native industry, seemed, as we approached them, to regard us with the indifference that might be accorded to life-long acquaintances.

It must be confessed, however, that we did not reciprocate this dignified *nonchalance* on the part of the shopkeepers of Colombo, for although the appearance of the Hindoo was now sufficiently familiar to us, that of the Cingalese was still somewhat of a novelty. No doubt we had seen him at Galle, his rather handsome dark figure enveloped in the universal *comboy*, so as to leave the arms and legs free, and his luxuriant black tresses gathered up, and confined by combs of different grades in the scale of gentility. We had seen him too, on our way hither, in a humbler sphere of life, and with scantier habiliments, sitting motionless on the ground at his heels, when deprived of the luxury of a stone, his bare skinny knees necessarily raised to his chin, his mutilated combs shapeless as a stunted growth of horns, and resembling in his stolid imperturbability a huge vulture, an old Egyptian effigy—anything in short rather than a living man.

Here, however, in the centre of industry and population, we found a wider range for observation, with the Cingalese toilet

apparent in greater variety and completeness. And truly men dressed in such a garment as the *comboy* (precisely resembling a cotton petticoat), flowing beneath woollen or cotton jackets, wearing large gold earrings, their long black hair rolled up in a knot behind, and fastened by a high, ornate comb of tortoiseshell, besides being parted in front, and adorned with side-combs of the same material, bore in our eyes a ridiculous resemblance to individuals of the other sex. So entirely was this the case, that when the owner of a luxuriant crop of whiskers thus arrayed presented his full face towards us, the incongruity seemed as absurd as if certain native merchants of Colombo had gone into masquerade for our especial entertainment.

In the simple and sober routine of Cingalese life, one disagreeable peculiarity alone is apparent—that of chewing all day long a mixture compounded of areca-nut, betel-leaf, and *chunam*. This habit seems to be universal from childhood to old age, so that all degrees of the people, whatever may be the quality of their robes or combs, are usually alike in a display of red teeth, and in the odious practice of squirting red juice around them. It is well known, however, that a great part of continental India is pervaded by this offensive custom.

The Cingalese women dress so far differently from the men, that they usually wear their hair without combs, but having where it is gathered up at the back a showy ornament resembling a large embossed gold or silver pin, which is set with jewels in quality and number commensurate with the means and circumstances of the wearer. They are also, as a rule, much smaller in stature. The additional fact that they wear the *chignon*, and have done so for generations, may serve to enlighten European

ladies on the frequently mysterious origin of supposed modern fashions. Notwithstanding these tests, however, we found it sometimes impossible to tell 'which was which,' many of the men being women to our apprehension; not only in respect of dress, but also of a perfectly smooth face, without a semblance of either beard or whisker. This difficulty is said to have presented itself in an amusing form to a well-known officer in Her Majesty's service on the occasion of his first arrival, in company with his wife, at a hotel in Colombo. On the following morning madame expressed her unqualified admiration of the expert manner in which the *lady's-maid* of the establishment had dressed her hair, and for a time could not be induced to believe that she had sat under the manipulation of a Cingalese professor of the opposite sex!

It remains to be noticed, however, that the use of combs as an ornament is confined to the maritime portion of the Cingalese population, the men of the interior, or Kandians, as they are called, professing to regard the fashion as contemptible and ridiculous.

Leaving the Fort, we visited the Cinnamon Gardens, a place in the neighbourhood celebrated for its cultivated fertility and producing a great variety of indigenous plants, besides the spice from which it derives its name. Here we saw, blooming in their native soil, some growths of European fame, with the taste and flavour of which we had long been on intimate terms; those, for example, of the everyday condiments called mustard and pepper, and that of the universally esteemed drug known as castor oil! In one place the ground was carpeted, to some extent, with the lowly 'sensitive plant,' which rose and writhed

at our feet like a countless living multitude of green, snaky forms. A portion of the Cinnamon Gardens has now been purchased for building purposes, and some handsome residences



CINNAMON PEELERS, CEYLON.

are in course of erection, to accommodate the increasing numbers of our countrymen in Ceylon.

A drive to Galle Face before dinner wound up an interesting day in Colombo, and with it, I may add, our experience of the

place, as it behoved us to return with the coach to Galle early on the following morning, the steamer for Madras being expected to sail on the evening of that day. Now the open area called Galle Face, besides being a racecourse, is the afternoon rendezvous of the European residents of Colombo, where the band plays thrice a week, and where the never-failing Eastern exercises of riding and driving towards the close of day are practised with characteristic solemnity. It may be that the routine of this recreation ground would not have appeared so dreary to my apprehension, but for my own sense of solitude, as a stranger in a foreign country. The scene was a green belt of land leading to a narrow sandy beach, on which crested billows broke with a wailing sound. Beyond the racecourse, in the direction of Galle, appeared a circle of European residences situated on the noisy shore-line, with only some bald, crooked palm-trees between them and the sea, and thus afflicted in perpetuity with the sound of wind and waves as the penalty of an airy situation in Colombo. Riders of both sexes cantered past, and family groups in carriages rolled along the road, without, however, manifesting any symptom of social animation. Nor was this apparent listlessness out of harmony with the nature of the place. The hot steamy atmosphere, the rank luxuriance of the earth, the monotonous plash of the breakers, and the blank stretch of ocean mingling in the distance with a pale lurid sky, all combined to produce that vague sense of depression which can be felt but not explained. This did not resemble any of our fresh seaside pictures at home. Even the narrow strip of sand constituting the shore was blotched and blurred throughout with a pale sickly weed, and the sun glared large and red at

the horizon as it slowly dipped into the sea. It was thus in no lively mood that I strolled down to the water's edge to witness, if haply I might, the novelty of a turtle's head raised inquiringly out of its native surf after the alleged manner of turtles in Ceylon. But now I heard behind me the strains of a bright familiar



THE KADUGINAWA PASS.

music which rang pleasantly above the solemn roll and dash of the ocean. Here even in the fading light of the sunset was something congenial and happy at last—the prattle and laughter (earth has no blither melodies) of two pretty little English girls,

in charge of their ayah, coming, as the final exercise of the day, to stream their flaxen tresses in the sea-breeze and watch the white breakers curl along the shore. It was plain that no feeling of estrangement existed in *their* case. This, probably, was the scene of their birth, the only home they had ever known. Though the life of England moved in their limbs and sparkled in their eyes, they had never looked upon her shores.



LAKE AND TOWN OF KANDY.

But, as a run as far as Colombo can afford but an inadequate notion of the interior scenery of Ceylon, I have been favoured by a friend with permission to interpolate here the following interesting description of his recent journey to Kandy, and the lovely upland region of the island.

Starting from Colombo at six in the morning, we proceeded by railway to the extent of thirty-two miles through a level, very luxuriant country, full of palm and cocoa-nut trees, rich foliage, and flowers, but all springing from a wet, swampy soil. You would think it entirely a wild wood, and unpeopled, but for the numbers of nude brown savages moving about gathering fruit or firewood, and the frequent, but always isolated, mud-walled, leaf-covered hut, embosomed among the trees, with no apparent road to or from it. We left the rail at a little village called Ambepasse, where a coach waited to take us, together with the mails, to Kandy, stopping at a government 'rest house' for breakfast. We then pushed on without delay, changing horses every six miles, to Kandy, where we arrived at 5 o'clock P.M. The road, winding up-hill all the way, is magnificent, with wonderful views suddenly unfolded at sharp turnings of overhanging precipices and deep ravines. The mountains are bold and high, covered with verdure to their summits, and the valleys are overspread with a rich growth of tangled leaves and flowers of varied hue. The scenery of the 'Kaduginawa Pass,' which we traversed, is something like a combination of mountain views in Switzerland and Scotland. The road is a continuous line of traffic by 'bullock bundies,' or covered carts, filled with produce and market goods, and each drawn by two bullocks. It is studded with small villages inhabited by a crew of dingy wretches, who earn a bare subsistence by selling provisions and other articles to the bullock-men as they pass.

Kandy is beautifully situated in a sheltered basin among the hills. It is an old little town—the capital of the island—and was the residence of the kings before they were conquered and driven out of the district. It swarms with natives, all busy trading in their own way, but Europeans are seldom encountered in its thoroughfares. There is little or nothing to be seen in Kandy except its temple, the chief attraction of which is 'Buddha's tooth,' a large discoloured piece of ivory. We were not however fortunate enough to see this interesting article, as sundry forms and ceremonies, entailing the sacrifice of some time, require to be gone through before that high privilege can be obtained. We heard the priests playing their exquisite music morning and evening, at sunrise and sunset, to propitiate the Devil, who is supposed to be mollified

by a *mélange* of sweet sounds produced by beating tom-toms, blowing cow-horns, and sounding a reed-instrument like a flageolet, none of which are either in time or harmony. The effect was not over soothing to *our* ears, whatever it may have been to those of his Satanic Majesty.

On our arrival at Kandy we found the friend to whom we were consigned absent from home for the day, and turned into a most wretched little hovel, pretentiously styled the 'Queen's Hotel.' We were not long there, however, as another friend soon made his appearance, who at once insisted on transporting us, bag and baggage, to his bungalow, well up on the hill overlooking the lake and town. This exalted villa is called 'Arthur's Seat,' and a beautiful place it is, surrounded by the richest roses, convolvuli, and other bright flowers, and commanding one of the finest views of mountain scenery I ever beheld. Here we were most kindly and handsomely entertained. During the day the silence of nature is only broken by the slight buzzing of bees and butterflies in the sunshine; for the birds here, though numerous and of gay plumage, do not sing, an occasional chirrup being their only effort in that direction, but at night the woods and groves resound with loud noises, which are continued without intermission till daylight. These sounds emanate from frogs, grasshoppers, and such creatures, while the whole air is illumined with fire-flies dancing and darting about in myriads.

Within, during the evening, we sat of course with the doors open, and were much troubled with flights of long-winged ants, which, attracted by the light, nearly filled the lamps and choked the candles. On Thursday morning we resumed our journey in a two-wheeled 'bandy,' or high dog-cart, I driving, and the bare-legged, red-turbaned 'horse-keeper' perched on the springs behind. A magnificent drive we had, winding up-hill with splendid views before us, but with sharp turns and awfully unprotected precipices, which kept my companion continually telling me to bestow my admiration on the horse and not on the hills, as a stumble would in all likelihood serve to topple us down into the valley below.

At 'Wangipilli,' twelve miles up, we found a fresh horse, which had

been sent on for us the day before, and after a glass of the never-failing and ubiquitous 'Bass,' started again. Wangipilli is a small knot of native huts, styled a village, in appearance like a little Highland clachan, and with a government 'rest house.' These 'rest houses' are small open bungalows, provided by Government where an inn would not pay, in order that travellers may halt for refreshment to man and beast, and are very useful places indeed.

After leaving Wangipilli we were drenched with heavy rains, but at the same time regaled with grand wild scenery. In the afternoon we reached Madooltrellie, where the 'master' of the estate directed us to Conoonagola, our destination, which we reached with a little difficulty just as darkness set in, and were very kindly received by the hospitable proprietor. The planter's life is rather hard and decidedly comfortless. Here we found a young gentleman of good family and superior education—a Cambridge man—living alone with two coolies as servants. He was dressed in easy trousers, a flannel shirt, and navy boots, and in this fashion spent the years in a pretty little bungalow on the hillside, among trees and rocks, close to a dashing little brook. The bungalow, though attractive externally, was bare within, and the cheer it afforded was of the plainest kind, for all provisions (even bread) had to be carried in a box poised on a coolie's head a distance of some thirty miles. The routine of life is patriarchal in its simplicity, the settlers rising at dawn and going to bed tired out at eight o'clock in the evening.



CHAPTER XXII.

CEYLON AND ITS STORY.

(IN WHICH WE RETURN TO GALLE AND INVEST IN JEWELLERY.)

To be honest, as this world goes, is to be
one man picked out of ten thousand.—*Hamlet.*

The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose, that's flat.
Love's Labour's Lost.



ND now to resume my own story.

Having spent a quiet evening in Colombo as the almost necessary result of a visit to accomplish which we had ridden all night and rambled all day, we bade adieu to our friends in the morning and started by coach on our way back to Galle.

We had thus an opportunity of renewing our acquaintance with the moonlit scenes of the previous evening in their everyday aspect of vivid sunshine, and of witnessing other features of the country which had been hidden by the 'night-side of nature.'

The rich indigo-coloured sea that lay under the full moon of

last night, now absolutely glowed in the strong light, in shade a pale colourless blue, and had acquired the additional variety, here and there, of a solitary ship in the distance, or a few fishing-boats far out in the dazzling prospect, where the sea was foaming round the hidden rocks. On the other hand lay the island itself—a fair and luxuriant landscape covered with dense foliage, stretching away to the hills which, like an ascending range of peaks and terraces, rose behind one another with gradually fading distinctness, until the higher eminences became blended with the fleecy clouds and glowing azure of the sky. Everywhere around, palm-trees of different species stood like the natural warders of the soil amidst the thick flowering herbage by which it was overspread, overlooking the rich foliage of the banyan-tree and the huge leaves of the plantain and the jack, with their varied hues of green. Great clusters of cocoa-nuts hung over the way, high up on trees, whose tall trunks were girt with circles of matting, by way of steps, the better to enable the happy proprietor to reach his store, while a series of round cuttings on the bark recorded the age of each, and enabled him to estimate the duration of its fruitfulness. The boughs on either side were also laden with abundant supplies of the large jack fruit, the sweet plantain, and the delicious green orange.

The road and habitations by the way, so silent and deserted during our recent midnight passage, had equally undergone a metamorphosis, being now astir with their usual round of life. Complacently crosslegged in front of their respective doors, sat the village tailor and shoemaker, while wrights and other tradesmen, visible within the airy precincts of little frame-like workshops, quietly plied their several crafts, with an amount of

energy suited to the overpowering heat of the day. More than



DRAWING TODDY.

one proud mother, as we rolled quickly past her domicile, held up her fine baby for our admiration, or hastily pointed to some

nude young specimen of the race, who was staring at us with dilated mouth and eyes, her object being to communicate the interesting fact, that in him we beheld her offspring.

The glorious day had even brought with it some animation to the solitary lagoons and compounds of the previous night, for in the shining lakes (whose banks and shores we now perceived, as we rattled across the loose planks that spanned them, to be only a thick profusion of leaf and stem) a considerable number of Cingalese were disporting their sable persons. In the wayside enclosures, grown men, both Cingalese and Madrasees, amused themselves like children, only in a greatly more earnest way, with swings erected among the trees, one tall fellow solemnly pushing, while the other's huge bulk in silence skimmed the air, his face meanwhile displaying the gravity of a senator.

Before reaching Galle, we stopped at a narrow pathway, conducting us through a field and some shrubbery to a little temple embowered among the luxuriance, where we 'looked in' on an enormous figure of Buddh, which, like the very large host of a very small house, sat near the doorway, shedding down upon all comers a well-depicted smile of affability and condescension.

I must not, however, omit to recall a much more interesting and suggestive incident of the way which we had encountered an hour or two before. This was a long procession of Cingalese—men, women, and children—all neatly and carefully attired. The women especially (the customary bare feet notwithstanding) presented a prepossessing exterior, wearing blue woven *sarongs* and pure white jackets, their jet-black hair

brushed over the forehead, gathered in a knot behind, and glistening with excess of cocoa-nut oil. Although, as every one knows, the Cingalese women are somewhat diminutive in size, and not celebrated for comeliness, the individuals composing this feminine crowd might at least claim such admiration as is due to beautiful black eyes, as well as the higher award which



BUDDHIST TEMPLE, CEYLON.

belongs to a modest deportment, the eager inspection of the coach passengers being scarcely acknowledged by them with a reciprocating glance.

Every individual in the multitude wore on the neck a string of pearl-like beads, from which depended a silver cross; so that we scarcely needed the information communicated by the driver, that we beheld a congregation of Roman Catholic converts, on their way to a chapel belonging to that communion. Equally evident was it that we beheld a very imposing spectacle—the

accomplished transition, no less, of a large youthful band of pagans from darkness into light. Let me add that, though a member of the Protestant communion, I felt not less deeply impressed with this conversion; for, indeed, the gulf that too widely separates the several divisions of the Christian Church at home, becomes infinitely contracted on alien soil, and in presence of the common foe, where Christianity in all its branches illustrates Solomon's allegory of 'a little city, and few men in it.' Then Christian polemics become lost in the recognition of a great equality. Nor did it seem necessary to sound the depths of theology, in order to estimate the value of the exchange which these Cingalese had made. They had abandoned the empty sophistries of their native priesthood, for the elevating doctrines expounded by the Apostles of the New Testament.

This glorious transformation the Roman Catholic Church was competent to effect in Buddhist minds, inspiring them with new and startling views of heaven and the life to come—no longer a wild, empty dream of Pythagorean changes, leading to 'nothingness,' but a land of joy and beauty, peopled with angels and archangels, where human sorrow is healed and virtue wears a crown.

I have said that these people bore a cross on the breast as the symbol of their new faith, and may add that their looks gave no sign either of stupidity or hypocrisy. Is it then unreasonable to suppose that such teaching as that to which I have referred had already revolutionized the listless tenor of their lives, by imbuing their minds with something for which to live—and die?

It was, I think, on that same afternoon, before leaving for

Madras, while returning to the hotel with a friend from a shop in Galle, whither he had taken us in his carriage to make some purchases, that I acquired the very beautiful ring which I still retain as a trophy of our visit to the land of sapphires. A poorly-clad, half-starved-looking Cingalese thrust it in at the window, glittering between his thumb and forefinger, stating in broken English, as he ran beside the wheels, that he needed money and would take 5*l*. for it. The appearance of the sapphire was too perfect to admit of much doubt as to its purity, and the price was ridiculously low for such an article ; but then there *was* a doubt, and I had already spent my allotted sum on the alluring products of Ceylon. I therefore resisted the temptation, declining the offer in that tone of mingled impatience and command which I had heard the initiated employ in the like circumstances, as affording the best chance of being obeyed. I was not obeyed however, my peremptory refusal to have anything to do with the ring simply eliciting a pertinacious demand to know how much I would be 'pleased to offer for it.' Nor was the loud, united 'Be off' of our party, three in number, of the slightest avail. The vender continued to hold up the ring before my face, crying, 'What you give, what you give?' running the while at the open window of the carriage, with an ease and determination that bade fair to tire out the horse or to see us to our journey's end, as the case might be. At length my friend, whom experience had taught the mystery of dealing effectually with such an attack, explained that I must, with an appearance of earnestness, offer the fellow some ridiculous sum for the ring, and he would then probably turn away disgusted. Acting on this suggestion, I asked him in a serious tone, if, as,

an honest man, he could vouch for the thorough purity of the stone; whereupon he put his hand to his heart, and solemnly affirmed, 'Ring no gold, no—no; but stone good—true; yes, yes, yes.' This ingenuous statement of facts we felt was scarcely necessary to confirm our belief in the poor creature's honesty; still, in order to get rid of him at once, I said, with an air of mock gravity, 'Well, as you vow that the stone is quite pure, I will give you half-a-crown for it.' Our astonishment may be conceived, but cannot be depicted, when, instead of quitting us with an offended air, as had been predicted, he thrust his hand holding the ring eagerly into the carriage, simply uttering the expressive monosyllable 'TAKE.' Yes, we were invited to *take* the charming ornament for half-a-crown, and at the same time to realize the humiliating fact that, in taking it, even at that price, we were ourselves 'taken in!' Following astonishment of course came indignation, but the fellow was utterly deaf to the epithets of 'knave' and 'scoundrel,' with which we assailed him, opposing an air of stolid indifference to our excitement, which would have been magnanimous in any but a very bad cause—his hand held open to receive the purchase-money at our leisure, while we debated the propriety of repudiating the transaction. His perseverance was not in vain. We concluded that the offer having been actually made, and the attempt to befool having been mutual, we were in honour bound to implement the bargain. And so I gave him half-a-crown, receiving in exchange a really beautiful ring, composed of glittering brass and blue crystal, worth, as I afterwards took the trouble to ascertain, the sum of *one shilling* in a fair, honest market!

CHAPTER XXIII.

COROMANDEL SANDS

Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.—WORDSWORTH.



WE were again at sea among a homogeneous crowd of passengers, lolling languidly in their chairs, or shuffling about the deck in sun-hats and loose white habiliments down to the very shoes they wore. The steamer was bound for Calcutta, having as usual touched at Galle on her way. Our course was now round the eastern coast of Ceylon, in the circuit of which we enjoyed a bright moving panorama of white bays and green promontories, lashed with crested billows and presided over by high mountains, the space between being crammed with a mighty growth of vegetation. We had some fresh wind during the passage, and experienced a 'blow' while passing in front of the Palké Straits. Soon, however, we crept into the shelter of the Coromandel coast, that fickle and inhospitable region which, blooming awhile with tropical wealth of verdure, becomes, under the influence of hot winds, a barren wilderness with no other

remains of green life than the leaves of the deep-rooted trees ; and which, through its whole extent of 350 miles, does not afford a single natural harbour or landing-place by way of protection from an ever-rolling swell. Behind it lay the Carnatic—in bygone days a chief seat of Oriental pomp and power in Lower India, and notable for its many stately temples, forts of defence, and other public monuments of wealth and civilization, now crumbling into dust among the ruins of deserted cities. There exists, nevertheless, throughout the Carnatic, a considerable export trade in produce and manufactures. Among the former are indigo, grain, and other products of the soil, while the latter include dyed and printed cloths, of a coarse description, together with such articles as gold or silver ornaments, and figures printed on *talc*, all of which are executed in a manner that fairly commends the artistic talent of the people.

The Carnatic was once the dominion of the Nabobs of Arcot, and is celebrated in Indian history as an arena of military strife, having, even since the beginning of last century, been subject to the power of Delhi, under the Emperor Aurungzebe, and then severed from its control by Nizam al Mulk ; next governed by a ‘ Nabob of the Carnatic,’ and afterwards fought for through a series of desperate battles, in which French and English joined, until at length, after being overrun by the forces of Hyder Ali, it was conquered by British arms in the first year of the present century. For some time afterwards the civil administration of the country remained with the Nabobs of the Carnatic, by whom, however, the revenues were squandered, and the British Government was forced to assume the reins. On the death of

the last ruler without issue, the titular dynasty was abolished by Lord Dalhousie in pursuance of his plan of 'lapse.'

Such, in a word, is the eventful story of the Carnatic, the population of which, numbering from 10,000,000 to 11,000,000, chiefly Hindoos, subject as they still necessarily are to periods of sore famine, now dwell in comparative peace and prosperity amidst the ruins of their national grandeur. But, in truth, that splendour was only an unstable glare shed by a system of government which squandered the resources of the country on the ambitious projects of the throne.



CHAPTER XXIV.

MADRAS WITHOUT.

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore.—POPE.

The knowledge of the natural advantages or defects of a country form an essential part of political science and history.—JUSTUS MOSER.



HE city of Madras seems, as the ship approaches, to rise miraculously out of the sea. Its first aspect is that of a large group of white buildings, mingled with spires and columns, like monumental relics, standing on a solitary shore; and were it to be criticized as witnessed only a short distance outside the foam-line of its broad sandy beach, a stranger might wonder by what perversity of judgment Madras had been planted on the ocean-bound edge of a desert. As a sea view, in short, with its crowd of flat roofs interspersed with elegant shapes of pillar, portico, and temple, Madras has the appearance of some deserted city, which had been reared with Grecian skill, and left to waste on a barren soil. In this respect, however, it reveals itself as the converse of Constantinople—Constantinople, the magnificent and alluring, as seen from the Bosphorus, with gilded domes and minarets sparkling amidst a deep green profusion of tall cypress-trees—Constantinople the foul and beggarly in reality, with narrow filthy streets, rickety, poverty-stricken dwellings, and

open crowded graveyards, where flourish the cypress-trees so beautiful, amidst such surroundings as nothing, however beautiful, could adorn or redeem.

The long sweep of the Indian Ocean never ceases to break noisily on the Madras shore, marking it, as far as the eye can reach, with a white border of spray. Even when the sea is calm without, the crested breakers rise up near the water-line and resound along the beach. It is seldom, however, that anything approaching to smoothness exists, and we have here an example of that to which the world does not furnish a parallel—a large maritime city with no other receptacle or anchorage for ships great and small than a place outside in the deep rolling swell of the ocean. Through that surging mass of waters, in *mussulah* boats manned by native rowers, are borne all those heavy stores that constitute the imports and exports of Madras, as shown by the yearly statistical tables,—a traffic in native growths of cotton, indigo, pepper, sugar, grains, together with cloth, yarns, beer, wine, metals, and the many other importations (including that of Anglo-Saxon humanity) now so freely flowing in to the people from the marts of western civilization. To such an anchorage (as we find by summing up details given in the 'Asylum Press Almanack' for 1868, and estimating by the number of arrivals and departures) there came of vessels trading between England and the Red Sea, in the year ended December 1867, 155 large sailing ships, besides the multitude of smaller craft, together with ninety large steamers, reckoning those of the Peninsular and Oriental Company alone, to load and unload among the billows.

In these days science has revealed the means of constructing

landing-places, even among the shifting sands of the ocean, and the very solid, stately pier of Madras, extending into the sea as far as 1,000 feet beyond the high-water mark, is a triumph of engineering enterprise. This screw-pile pier was contracted for in 1858, and only recently finished, at a cost of about 108,000*l*.; but with all the advantages which naturally pertain to such a noble structure, with its four lines of railway and fourteen cranes with varied lifting powers of from one and a half to ten tons, it is here only usefully available when the intermittent pulse of the ocean is not high, and then only for passenger or cargo boats, which at the best, when discharging or receiving freight, swing on the troubled waters in a manner that renders some caution necessary for the preservation of life and property.

It remains to be added, however, that at length the star of hope has arisen over the stormy roadstead of Madras. Lord Mayo, the present Viceroy of India, during his visit to that city in the early part of this year, discussed with its principal merchants the practicability of constructing a suitable harbour and breakwater. Should this scheme be carried into effect, then indeed the blank barren line of the Coromandel coast will at length have acquired an oasis, pleasant to approach, and teeming with the seeds of commercial wealth and prosperity.

It is one of the familiar facts of observation, that men everywhere manage to adapt their powers to the circumstances of their lives—to burrow like moles, for example, into the bowels of the earth where the surface becomes uninhabitable, or at the stern bidding of necessity to dive fathoms deep into the bed of the sea. Need we wonder then, that the poor fishermen of

Madras, dwelling on a coast where no ordinary boat is manageable in a way which is practicable to them, should be found conquering the opposition of surf and swell by launching two or three wooden logs firmly tied together, and with no other footing between them and the sharks, going forth singly or in parties to ride the waves? There they were in considerable numbers as we came to anchor in the roadstead, lank dark figures wholly unprotected from the sea breeze, oscillating on their *catamarans* in standing or kneeling postures, with looks of perfect



CATAMARANS.

composure, and moving along by means of a flat piece of wood dipped on either side alternately. Not that these accomplished billow-riders are never 'spilt' into the raging surge, but this event, when it does occur, merely entails the trouble of remounting their swing, which they do with great agility and small concern, the sharks, according to local fancy, witnessing the act with their hungry green eyes, but seldom offering any opposition. If it were true, as some aver, that these monsters of the deep here exhibit a greater partiality for white flesh, so interest-

ing a fact might engage the attention of ichthyologists. Most people, however, will be sceptical enough to conclude that the frequent escape of these children of the surge from the natural consequences of immersion among Coromandel sharks, is due more to their own agility than the forbearance of the ever-watchful foe.

More numerous and noisy were the *mussulah* boats, by which the steamer was immediately surrounded. These extraordinary looking craft are shaped something like a half cocoa-nut cut



MUSSULAH BOAT.

lengthwise, and are thus available for the apparently impossible office of landing goods and passengers among the breakers at the shore. Each boat being under the undirected guidance of ten or a dozen rowers, and the crews of all being clamorous for an engagement, the shouting and gesticulating, as they offered their services, were necessarily on a scale of startling magnitude and persistence.

So large and demonstrative an assemblage of Asiatics in their

native undress, convened to receive us on our arrival in the roadstead of Madras, was thus, I fear, a sight more afflicting than affecting to the ordinary eye. And yet I can testify that, as we came to join them in their boats, this meeting of the races was not without 'some show of affection'; for as each passenger going ashore, choosing a moment of comparative calm, leaped into the *mussulah* boat, he or she was caught in at least one pair of outstretched tawny arms, closely embraced, and laid down unscathed in the capacious hollow of the vessel. The signal that we were ready to leave the ship provoked a fresh tumult among the crew; another outbreak, aggravated by the noise of the waves, occurring as we reached the sands, to which the boat, guided nevertheless with admirable skill, was turned broadside, and allowed to bump as it might, while we, its living freight, fantastically shrouded in anything within reach by way of protection from the spray, were carried one by one through the surf, in a chair borne on the shoulders of the boatmen.



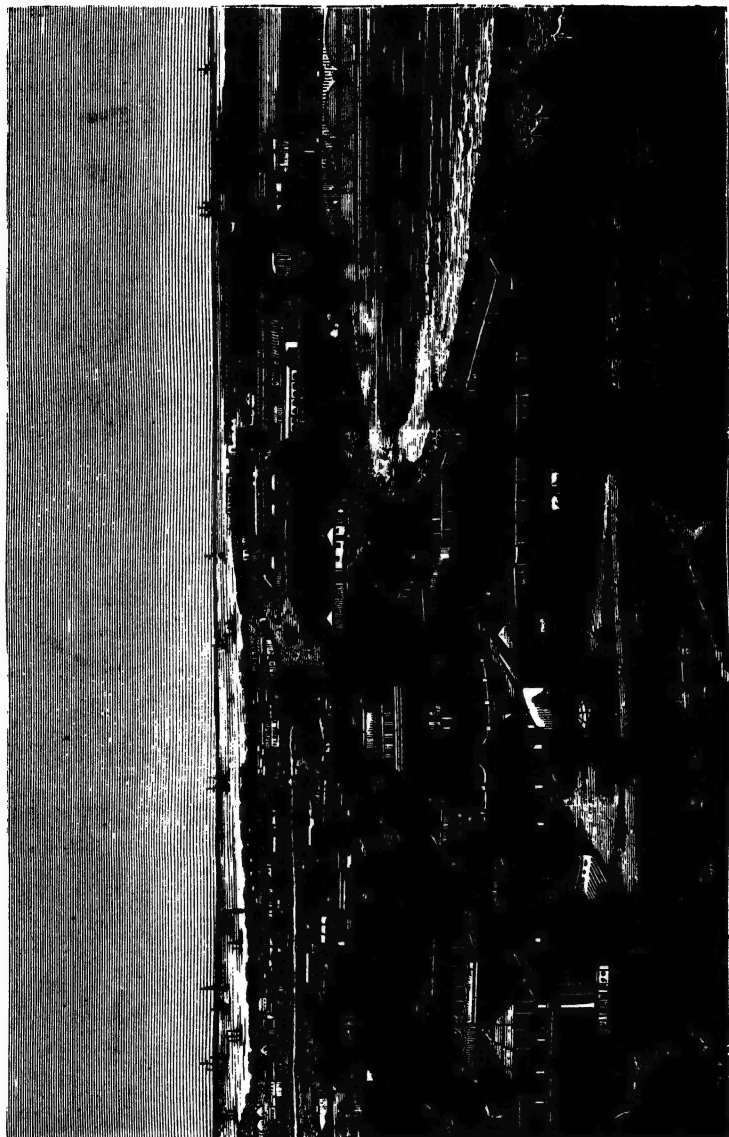
CHAPTER XXV.

MADRAS WITHIN.

Hail, social Life ! into thy pleasing bounds
 Again I come to pay the common stock
 My share of service, and in glad return,
 To taste thy comforts, thy protected joys.—THOMSON.



Y first impression of Madras on landing was such as to recall Brighton, minus its shops (for the front buildings chiefly consist of the large warehouses of mercantile firms), but with a population—how very different ! We found the friend whose hospitality we were to enjoy while there waiting our arrival, and were at once conducted to his beautiful residence in the suburbs. It being still early in December, the country was bright and green. Through a series of wide intersecting roads, each like a fine avenue, extending for some miles beyond the city, and surrounded by paddy-fields and meadow-land, the European merchants of Madras pass daily between their places of business near the beach and the lovely habitations in which they are privileged to dwell. These are mostly situated in parks or compounds, opening from the luxuriant highway, and surrounded by trees, among which are the date-palm and banyan, the feathery *casuarina* (or 'fir of India'), and other rich growths, many of them blooming with



VIEW OF MADRAS.

a gay crop of flowers. Some of the houses are of palatial dimensions, and in nearly all the interior consists of large airy chambers, opening into one another (a curtain partially covering the entrance at each doorway), and surrounded by verandahs on both floors. From every ceiling depends the ubiquitous *punkah*, which is worked by a cord passing through the wall to an adjacent apartment, or into the verandah, where, crouching on the floor, the listless workman plies his simple yet ceaseless task. The furniture chiefly in vogue is made of an ebony-wood indigenous to the country, enriched by the skill of native craftsmen with an elaborate amount of carving; and the spacious elegance of the interior arrangements is admirably set off by the beautiful white lime, or *chunam*, of the walls, which is also a product of the place. This lime is manufactured from the inexhaustible supply of sea-shells spread over the neighbouring shores, and has served to adorn many buildings in Madras with a splendid coating of pure glistening white. Among such I can recall more particularly the elegant English Cathedral of St. George, and the equally handsome Scotch Church of St. Andrew, the walls and columns of which glowed in the vivid light with a sheen as clear as the finest marble.

The city of Madras, with its suburbs, may be said to occupy a circuit of twelve or fourteen miles, so that its population of 427,771 is much scattered, the Mahometan portion, who are not considered very friendly to the Feringhi Raj, or foreign rule, residing in a particular quarter of their own. I remember, indeed, that while driving through this district, we were regarded from door and window by not a few bold black eyes, whose language, whatever it might be, was clearly not that of

welcome. Of the entire inhabitants, according to an official document recently published, about three-fourths are Hindoos



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH, MADRAS.

and one-seventh Mussulmans, the remainder being Eurasians and Europeans; for here, as it so happens, neither Jew, African, Chinaman, nor Parsee has a place in the enumeration, although

all these are found in Calcutta and Bombay. Among the Hindoos, the Tamils, a docile and industrious race, who are very useful as servants, form a numerous body ; and, as regards the general appearance of the people, the Madras natives are plainer than those of Bombay, the difference being especially remarkable in the case of the dealers or merchants frequenting the go-downs, who cut but a poor figure in contrast with the grand puggeries, flowing robes, and consequential strut of some of their western neighbours.

In a prominent position and close to the shore stands an extensive erection, which is at once the chief ornament of Madras and the conservatory of British power there—Fort St. George—comprising a series of buildings with sufficient accommodation for 1,000 men, and garrisoned, according to the military organization of the country, by a combined force of European and native soldiery. But the centre of social life, called the Black Town, is separated from the Fort by a wide esplanade, and contains the principal shops and bazaars, the large storehouses of European firms, together with a crowd of native dwellings built of brick or bamboo. Here, through a close huddle of streets, deep laid in dust, moves a busy throng of passengers, bullocks, and creaking vehicles, raising stifling clouds, together with a great babble of sound. Palanquins are in spare use in Madras as compared with Calcutta and Bombay. The bazaar shops are filled with the various productions of the country, some of them exhibiting a fine display of hand-loom muslins and cloth of gold. There are boxes of lace and artificial flowers from Pondicherry ; talc pictures, in glaring colours, from Trichinopoly ; specimens of tamarind-wood found in the sands ; gold

and silver ornaments; articles in coral and amber; moco stones, garnets, and many other characteristic wares.

From the close, crowded precincts of the Black Town it is a refreshing transition to the adjoining esplanade; whither, as in Bombay, European ladies drive every afternoon to meet their husbands and accompany them home.

The vital energy of Madras city is apparent in the multitude of its institutions, civil and religious. According to details furnished by the 'Asylum Press Almanack,' the churches and chapels 'represent every form of Christian faith,'—'Established,' 'Free,' 'Wesleyan,' 'Baptist,' 'Evangelical,' 'Lutheran,' 'Armenian,' or 'Roman Catholic,' each with its own 'Missionary Association.' Among other religious societies appear the 'Auxiliary Bible Society,' the 'Scripture Readers' Society,' the 'Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,' the 'Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge,' the 'Religious Tract and Book Society,' and the 'Christian Vernacular Education Society,' the various committees of which consist of familiar English names, conjoined with such as 'Dr. S. Jesudasen Pillay,' 'Rev. W. T. Sathianadhan,' and 'Rev. J. Rajahgopaul.'

It thus appears, beyond doubt, that the machinery of Christian proselytism exists largely in Madras. The vineyard is systematically cultivated; while among the labourers, a few at least are native to the soil.

The secular associations include a 'Literary Society,' an 'Agricultural and Horticultural Society,' a 'Philharmonic Society,' a 'Widows' and Orphans' Fund Society,' a 'Friend in Need Society,' and a 'Building Society,' as well as other institutions of a similar nature. Such bodies as the 'Native

Christian Brethren Society' and the 'Native Christian Literary Society' are governed by a mixed native and European directorate; while others—those, for example, of the 'Madras Hindu Dravia Sakara Nidhi,' or 'Savings Fund,' and the 'Madras Hindu Janopokara Nithie,' or 'General Benefit Fund'—are regulated by an executive committee of native gentlemen alone. And truly the circumstance that Mr. T. Streenevasa Chariar, B.L., acts as 'President,' Mr. C. Lutchmenarayana Jyer as 'Secretary,' and Mr. C. V. Kristnamasawmy Pillay as 'Treasurer,' in connection with such excellent Hindoo institutions founded for the benefit of their poorer countrymen, may well be recorded on earth, as doubtless it is in heaven.

If the theory be true that climate influences the mind, there would appear to be something in the air of Madras calculated to stimulate the sentiment of brotherly love, seeing that in the city alone no fewer than nine Masonic bodies, under the respective cognomens of 'Lodge,' 'Arch,' or 'Encampment,' are engaged in the active exercise of their rites. More interesting still is the fact, that, in nearly all of these, the native and foreign elements are conjoined, even welded together, by a very hearty mutual feeling, if we are to admit there is anything in a name. This much, at least, may be said for the 'Perfect Unanimity Lodge,' wherein the name of 'Brother' Briton alternates with that of 'Brother' East Indian in the published list of members. Not being myself a member of the Ancient Order of Masonry (of which I desire to speak with all respect), I cannot estimate the practical value of the mystic tie which here unites these sons of Europe and Asia in a congenial bond of brotherhood. That will, of course, greatly depend on

the extent to which the 'Perfect Unanimity Lodge' conforms to its title. Beyond all question this profession of fraternity must be held to imply a real union of feeling and goodwill. But if such a bond as that here indicated exists in any genuine or hearty shape, on the part of these alien masonic 'brothers,' it may be accepted as a realization of the Scottish poet's much-quoted prophecy—

'It's coming yet, for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall *brothers* be for a' that !'

Madras, like Bombay, abounds in educational establishments, instituted either by Government or public effort, through the medium of which instruction in all branches of knowledge is provided for the people. Here, as elsewhere, are free schools, purely charitable in their constitution, while others, and these the greater number, are founded on the principle of exacting a small fee from the pupils, being supported otherwise by voluntary contributions, with, perhaps, the assistance of a 'grant in aid' from the Government. The 'Almanack' gives a list of twenty-six such institutions, many of them devoted entirely to the education of natives. Among these the 'School of Industrial Arts,' furnishing an attractive list of accomplishments, only charges a fee of eight annas (about one shilling) per month for 'artistic' instructions, the pupils in the industrial department being 'paid for their labour'; while the attendance of scholars in both departments of this establishment amounted last year to 'about 332.' We further gather that the 'Madras Medical College,' established for the instruction of 'Europeans, Eurasians, and natives,' was attended on October 1, 1867, by

119 pupils; that the 'Native Female Education Society,' designed to provide instruction, 'upon a Christian basis,' for 'the female children of the poor native inhabitants of Madras,' had an average attendance of 90 girls, among whom it is said that 'evidences have not been wanting of useful results'; that in 'Bishop Corrie's Grammar School' the 'tuition fee' is four rupees (about eight shillings) per month; and that the 'S. P. G. Anglo-Vernacular School' (the object of which is to give boys 'a sound education based on religious principles') is conducted by an English gentleman as acting-principal, assisted by 'fourteen native masters, with one Tamil and two Telegu moonshees,' and has 'upwards of 380 boys on the roll,' each of whom 'pays on admission one rupee and a monthly fee of eight annas.'

It will thus be seen that, in the city of Madras also, the educational system, based on a liberal plan, is in active progress; and it only remains to be added that such institutions prevail in other parts of the Presidency to an extent in some measure proportionate to the population, the entire number receiving State support being, according to the last published statistics, 1,386 schools and colleges, with an attendance of 51,118 pupils.

As a result of that estimable policy, founded on a primary law of human nature, whereby the sympathy of the people has been largely won, natives and foreigners are associated in the rolls of the various educational establishments, not excepting the senate of the University itself, whose list of fifty-four 'Fellows' contains eleven Indian names.

Then as a natural accompaniment of so much moral and intellectual culture, we find that the current literature of the city now comprises six 'newspapers,' of which two are daily; and

twenty-three 'publications,' of which nine are monthly (the whole of these being in the English language); together with one weekly 'publication' in 'Tamil' and one tri-monthly in 'Telegu,' bearing respectively the somewhat portentous titles of 'Dhinavurtamani' and 'Vurthamathurunghini.'

But numerous as are these schemes of religion, education, and charity, they do not exhaust the list of friendly alliances in



BEACH OF MADRAS.

Madras. English and native troops guard the Fort together; English and native merchants too, congregated in large airy offices overlooking the sea, traffic daily in merchandise, the interchange of which is a great and growing advantage on both sides.

Whence, then, that morbid sentiment which bewails the so called exclusive character of British rule in India and enslaved condition of the 'poor Hindoo'? Facts sufficiently show that

the native people are now to a great extent united with ourselves in the prosecution of those aims that concern alike the moral welfare and the material prosperity of the country.

Although therefore, as an Indian city, Madras is more homogeneous than Bombay or Calcutta, it will be manifest that the lives of our countrymen there are not without varied sources of interest. The ordinary routine of the day, indeed, is charming in itself; including as it does the *chota hasaree* in the verandah before dawn, succeeded by the early ride or walk, while the large globe of the sun, rising from a bed of glory, disperses the dewdrops that gem the grass and sparkle on every leaf and bough; the bright drive after breakfast, through wide fields and long avenues, to the city proper; the cool, shady retreat of the many windowed 'go-down,' where airy-linen jackets, or, it may be, the sweeter relief of shirt-sleeves, make pleasant the business of the day; the indispensable two o'clock *tiffin*, hot, rich, and various—the better to repair the waste of nature and, unless some self-denial be exercised, to 'spoil' the major meal; all wound up with the delightful rendezvous on the esplanade an hour before sunset, and the homeward ride or drive with the ladies while the evening shadows fall.

Such was my own experience of Madras. The pleasant home of our kind entertainer was situated about four miles from the Black Town. Within it were children and bright smiles—while without were flowers and sunshine—flowers on the lawn and flowers in the garden, which the fervid rays that shone on both would have withered but for the water which a sable gardener, with unencumbered limbs, poured ever and anon over the parched leaves. The garden, a little paradise in itself, was

traversed by a channel leading to and around the flower-beds ; and thus, through the instrumentality of a hose connected with an adjacent well, the necessarily constant irrigation was maintained.

The well of which I speak was a thorough specimen of its class, broad, round, and deep ; its position in the landscape being distinguishable at some distance by the high wooden apparatus whereby the bucket was let down empty and brought up full of water. On that elevation, as often as a supply was required from the still depths, appeared the presiding genius of the well—a human form, marching to and fro in dark relief of ‘beauty unadorned’ against the sky, now moving aloft, then apparently about to descend into the water, as the ends of the long beam on which this exercise was performed, and to which the vessel was slung, rose and fell by force of his bodily weight.

Occasionally, when all was still, during the bright hours of midday, the shady quietude of the bungalow was invaded by a succession of unbidden visitors from among the teeming forms of life revelling in the rich luxuriance without. Now a little squirrel came and performed gymnastics for awhile on the pillars of the verandah ; anon a lizard—not a beautiful but a perfectly harmless guest—announcing its presence with a clear ‘click, click,’ appeared disporting on the wall ; birds, almost as confident as the doves of *La Santissima Annunziata*, would also drop in at times to circumnavigate the rooms ; even a frog one day leapt enquiringly ‘ben’ towards the room where we were reading, and sat mouthing and staring at the door.

There was one creature however, which, more capable of self-protection than all the others, and apparently quite at home, never paid us the compliment to venture indoors. This was

the crow—a weird, antiquated little fellow, with a grey jacket and an enormous hooked nose. His name was legion, for his race overspread every field and homestead around, pervading them with the deep, bass note of his muffled, melancholy ‘caw.’ Being ubiquitous, he and his companions were also wont to feed among the poultry in the back-yard, hopping peeringly among the empty dishes which the cook might have chanced to leave outside the kitchen-door, or watchfully perched on some projecting angle or other ‘coign of vantage,’ ready to pounce upon any edible morsel which chance or negligence might place within his reach. All movements in the court which could reasonably be held as suggestive of the approaching meal were favoured with his most careful observation. Of course he was constantly chased away as a nuisance and a thief, but then he as constantly returned to his place and opportunity; and whither he went, or whence he came, was sometimes, for aught that could be seen by the bodily eye, so great a mystery, that he might have been an imp of darkness, endued with the power of appearing and vanishing at will.

I have already alluded to the fact that the wheels of European life in India are kept in motion by a strong force of native service. But for the command of bone and muscle not their own, most ladies and gentlemen would be constrained to vegetate throughout the bright solar hours like hot-house plants. Thus the *goriwallah*, or coachman, in light stylish livery, who handles the reins and wields the whip; the *syce*, his turbaned attendant, who, with smooth ebony limbs, swift and lithe, leaps jauntily up behind the equipage, or scampers on before to clear the way; and the pair of sturdy little horses, of Arabian or Aus-

tralian breed, which run briskly through the glowing atmosphere, are among the common requisites of family life. Not that the establishment involves very great expense after all ; for an ordinary domestic servant considers himself well rewarded with seven or eight rupees (14s. to 16s.) per month. And thus it is that, in a country where men are sufficiently clothed with a stripe of calico, and amply fed with a few handfuls of rice, we find them contentedly engaged in occupations which the Western world has voted beneath the dignity of their mission. For, indeed, the several parts we habitually assign to cooks, washerwomen, housemaids, and servants-of-all-work, are here supplied from the teeming ranks of the male gender, and handy fellows abound who are equally at home with the needle and the besom. Here, too, men are the milliners and dressmakers, the *modistes* and seamstresses of European families. The lady of the house in which we stayed having arranged to get several muslin dresses made for her visitor, a couple of tall, whiskered figures forthwith appeared, and squatting cross-legged in the verandah, with the light, rustling material spread out before them, were soon stitching away as industriously as if they felt their vocation to be the manliest on earth.

The tyranny of eastern habits has deprived all women of a place in English family arrangements, except perhaps the Ayah nurse for the children, and the Ayah maid for mamma. Even the light swing of the *punkah* is due to the application of masculine vigour, in the person of the *punkah wallah*—a fact, by the way, which I have some cause to remember ; for it was my fate, in Madras, to occupy a bed supplied, in lieu of mosquito curtains, with this reputedly efficient means of protection, the

ornamental fringe of which waved the livelong night within an inch or two of my nose. Rather I should say, it waved and stopped, swung and stuck again, as we got well into the small hours; and the invisible motive power, recumbent on the verandah outside the chamber-wall, alternately collapsed into sleep and awoke to consciousness. Now it will be admitted that the situation here indicated was somewhat unfavourable for the exercise of an indulgent spirit, and that on those occasions when, the *punkah* being at rest, the mosquitoes seized their opportunity, and rushed in to devour me—which indeed they did—I was almost warranted in feeling as angry with the lazy fellow as if he had slipped in and bitten me himself. But my just indignation only rendered me the victim of an extra grievance; for the shout, born of the sentiment alluded to, with which I recalled this drowsy native to his duty, was wont to raise him with a jerk, and for an instant to nerve his arm with an energy which bade fair to bring down the apparatus about my ears! Another and more conscientious attendant soon relieved me of this infliction; but although there are seasoned sleepers in India, who profess actually to prefer the narcotic influence of the *punkah*, I would for my own part recommend mosquito curtains to the weary world at large as practically more favourable to slumber.

It is customary in these parts for European visitors to provide their own carriage and horses—a convenience readily supplied from the livery-stables, which necessarily constitute an important institution of the place. From one of these I procured a riding horse, which proved vivacious enough to give me such a sound shaking in the morning as precluded the necessity of any

farther exercise during the rest of the day—a fact which, while it constitutes a recommendation to others, may serve to illustrate the error of those who imagine that the languor which pervades human existence in India extends to equine life.

The piece-goods dealers, with whom I spent the midday period, divided between the warehouse and the bazaar, differed from those of Bombay not only, as I have said, in the absence of style both as regards dress and manner, but in the exercise of what may be termed a fossilized conservatism of taste as to pattern or colouring, which excluded even a shadow of variation. There was, however, no falling off in the kindness and hospitality of our compatriots. For three terrible days indeed, during our stay, Madras was without ice, and there was lamentation in every household we visited! Throughout that weary interval the ice-house displayed, as if in mockery, its capacious proportions by the shore, and eager eyes explored the misty expanse of ocean to see if the expected ship was at hand.

Our friend and host, whose business in life, unlike mine, was altogether of a sacred and self-sacrificing character, found his delight among the Christian institutions to which I have alluded, and one day entertained us at home by subjecting an entire school of children to the ordeal of an examination in the verandah. The crowd of small dark figures, some of very tiny size, yielded one by one, at the native master's call, a few of its more advanced members, who, coming to the front, told us, albeit in shrill and broken accents, many authentic truths about Adam and Enoch, the Apostle Peter, and the Angel of the Lord. The little scholars then sang in concert, and with the

like success, a very beautiful hymn, every verse of which ended with an appeal to 'Jesus, the Lamb of God.' That the spirit of religion was here to consecrate the words lisped forth in its name is hardly perhaps to be supposed; but the scene suggested the inference, that nothing is so well fitted to break the adamant of Hindoo superstition as an appeal to the fresh instincts and natural emotions of childhood.

Very properly, however, the work of religion, thus earnestly



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, MADRAS.

pursued, did not prevent our friends from accompanying us to a ball in Government House at Guindy, to which we had all been invited by Sir William and Lady Denison. There, in elegant *chunam*-white halls, bright with a profusion of wax-lights and gay with circling lace and epaulettes, amidst muslin robes flowing and gilded *punkahs* swaying, we enjoyed the popular Governor's hospitality and danced defiance to the climate.

It so happened at this time that a visitor of distinction, in the

person of a member of the House of Travancore, arrived in Madras city; for the Royal Families of Travancore, Hyderabad, and Cochin, besides a number of Rajahs, all in amicable relationship with our countrymen and institutions, hold rule under the British power in the wide Presidency of Madras. And thus it befel that this young Prince of Travancore, slender in form and of pleasant countenance, came to Madras arrayed in Persian silks and glittering gems, the guest of a

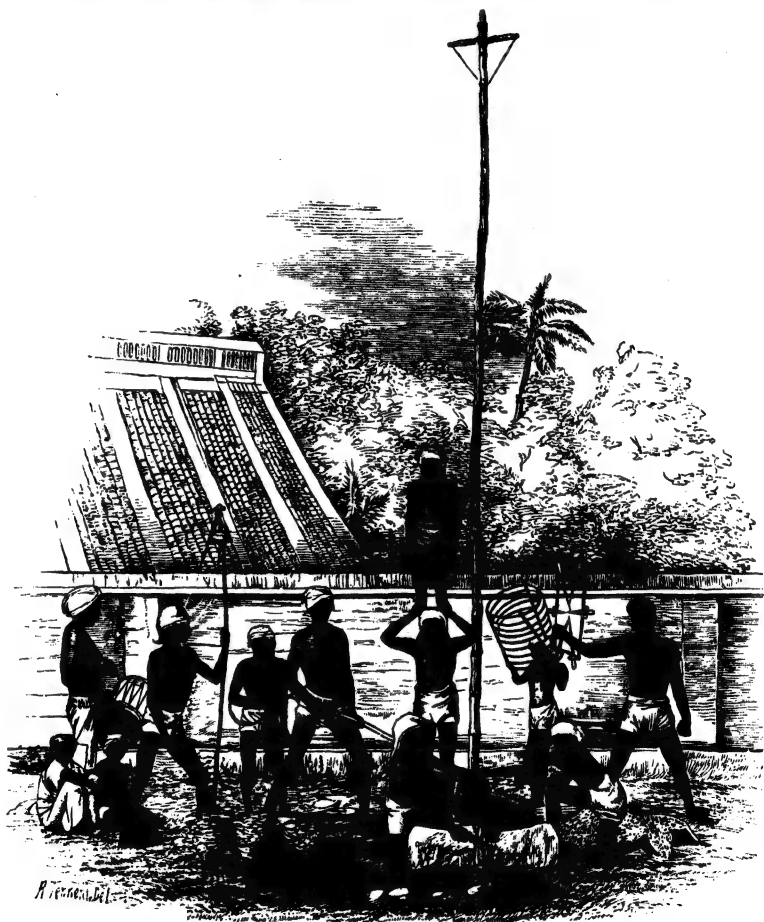


INDIAN LIBRA.

wealthy English merchant, whose lordly mansion and profuse hospitality afforded him a reception becoming his high rank and the good feeling I have indicated. In common with many others we were invited to meet His Highness at a *fête champêtre*, which was given in his honour. This was a gay and crowded assembly held both within doors and without. A full instrumental band, stationed in the hall, filled the house with melody, while, on the lawn, music, wonderful feats, and other

entertainments were in progress, the delicate ladies of Madras being protected from the sun by awnings, and all seasonable refreshments being set forth within the shady precincts of a long canvas tent. Madras, as every one knows, is celebrated for its conjurors, although that term is a misnomer as applied to many of the performers. The feats we witnessed here were marvellous enough in their way, but of conjuring in the proper sense of the word there was none. Thus the power of one wild-looking fellow lay, like that of Samson, in his hair, to which, without any preliminary demonstration, a square block of stone such as any ordinary mortal might have difficulty in lifting was attached, and swung thus suspended round his head with a rapidity that cleared the way around him. That man's single accomplishment was the result of a life-long practice with weights on a gradually augmented scale, although, even on that understanding, it seemed impossible to account for the strength and tenacity of his matted locks. Another poor skinny 'magician' had a wonderfully tough lining within his leathern neck; and this was the secret of *his* preternatural powers. The throat and thorax of this mountebank had been wrought into the consistency of iron by a long, irksome process, begun in childhood, of introducing gradually enlarged pieces of wood and sharp instruments, together with hot appliances, increased by degrees to the burning temperature as the flesh gained hardihood. And thus, like any demon, dragon, or salamander of fable, he could and did inhale and respire flames of fire as if they had been the very breath of his body, going through before our eyes the form of consuming a quantity of burning rags, which he manipulated the while, and ate piecemeal as he might his dinner of rice

More astounding still, these unpalatable mouthfuls, after being



GROUP OF JUGGLERS.

as fairly out of sight as a finished luncheon, were restored still burning to the light of day. The same performer also swal-

lowed the blade of a sword, whose point to all appearance must have sounded the depths of his internal organization, and drew it forth in another minute with the tragic air of a stage warrior unsheathing his weapon for some deed of valour.

But the most attractive, as well as the most conspicuous, performer was a female acrobat. This was a young native, of slender form, who balanced herself on the top of a very high pole, up which she had run with the agility of a monkey, by means of a rope connecting it with the ground at a suitable angle. There, high in the sun's glare, she stood, first on one foot then on the other, and finally on her head, with heels waving triumphantly in the air. At last, lithely gathering her really handsome figure somehow into the form of a ball, she slid down the rope with an increasing rapidity, resembling the unchecked force of gravity, the mortal danger of the momentum thus attained being provided against by a linen sack which her attendants below held open for her reception, and into which she vanished with startling celerity. This tragic *finale* may possibly have been meant to illustrate what would have happened had she been shot like a partridge in the air, and, falling headlong to the earth, been unceremoniously bagged, for the especial entertainment of the Prince of Travancore!

It would be a mistake to suppose that the Eastern practice of burning the dead implies a process of absolute annihilation. One afternoon I accompanied my friend to what is called a cremation ground. The place was set apart for the double purpose of burning and burial, and afforded us some interest both on its own account and because of the attendants in whose charge we found it. We were under the guidance of a Tamil

groom, who, if he came there with any feeling at all, might be thinking of the probably coming day when he himself would be consumed on the spot. Within a dense wood, and approached by a narrow winding pathway among the boughs, lay an open space filled with scattered stones, in appearance not unlike the ruins of some ancient village. There was no plan, or arrangement apparent in this strange cemetery, with its numerous shapeless forms of masonry embedded amid the untended growth of a luxuriant foliage. These were the graves, not of humanity but of the ashes to which it had been reduced. The foreign characters and rude images which many of the tombstones bore were barely traceable in the deepening twilight, which imparted an 'eerie' aspect to the scene. We were thus quite on the *qui vive* to be startled by the spectacle of two motionless human forms lying extended before our eyes in an open shed adjoining the spot where the dead were habitually given, by professional hands, to the flames. But we were naturally startled the more when, as we stood denouncing the official negligence which had apparently left them there in their winding-sheets, both figures bounded to their feet as by a simultaneous impulse, and approached us muttering what, for aught we could tell, might be the language of another world! These, as it turned out, were *burners*—firemen, so to speak, in a ghastly branch of trade—who had fallen asleep while waiting for the next benefaction of the Destroyer; and we had the satisfaction of observing that they awoke to disappointment in finding that none of us were in a condition to require their services. But Death, who is somewhere aptly styled 'a good paymaster,' did not baulk his humble attendants of their fee

that evening. As we gained the high road on our return home we descried, through the darkness which had now set in, a small company in white robes approaching the place of sepulture. This simple *cortège* proved to be a Hindoo funeral (a ceremony which is usually conducted by night), and a solemn dramatic scene it was,—the pall-bearers chanting a measured dirge, in which the word Rama was frequently repeated, and the uncovered face of the dead, upturned on an elevated bier, irradiated for the last time by the stars.

The author of 'Ecce Homo' makes bold to argue that a man might so train his mind as to obey in practice the Scriptural injunction to *love his enemies*, and cites among the means to be employed to that end an earnest consideration of those trials, sorrows, and bereavements to which such enemies, in common with all mankind, are subject. He must strive to realize their inevitable misfortunes, to estimate the weight of their allotted sufferings, and finally to imagine them in their winding-sheets helplessly stretched out in death. Thus, the writer suggests, feelings of hatred and vengeance might gradually give way to emotions of pity and regard. It may well be doubted if the human soul ever soared, by this or any other process of training, to such a heaven of sympathetic feeling, but unquestionably the ennobling influence here indicated is awakened in some measure by contact with such incidents as that to which I have just adverted. Christian teachers in Asia tell us in effect that the all-embracing sentiment, which this author has styled the 'enthusiasm of humanity,' ought to raise us above the prejudices of race and creed. These, indeed, are vain words of counsel; but here the observation of facts may have some power where the

appeal to compassion has failed. It is, I believe, a truth, known best to those who are personally acquainted with the subject, that the annals of the Indian poor are rich in fine traits of family affection, and that with all we know and are accustomed to hear of the ignorance and poverty pertaining to the common Hindoo mud hut, or cot of bamboo, are associated strong aspirations of human love, and those hopes that point to a reunion of friends in happier circumstances somewhere beyond the grave.

At last the people of India have found a historian. Mr. W. W. Hunter, in his first volume of the 'History of Rural Bengal,' and while yet on the threshold of the investigations in which he is officially engaged, points out in eloquent terms, as the result of his own experience, the need that exists for a better acquaintance with the more private aspect of native life. He suggests, as the 'Madras Mail' states in an approbatory article, that those who would form a just conclusion on the subject, should 'go forth into the fields, penetrate the jungle, linger in the thatch-roofed cottages, and mingle with the people, trying to understand them as equals and friends, and to interpret those undercurrents of joy and suffering which make their inner life.'

At the time of which I write the grass had already begun to lose its green appearance, but it was hoped that the precious days of rain were not yet at an end, the fall that season having been unusually scanty. This expectation was encouraged for a time by the ever-recurring appearance, in the hopeful quarter of the sky, of some gathering shape of darkness, which however, after lingering a while an object of even public observation and interest, vanished away. For it must be

remembered that the sun-obscuring clouds are not regarded with disfavour here as in England, but are on the contrary hailed with the welcome that might be accorded to angels with healing in their wings. No wonder, then, that the 'Madras Times' should one morning during our stay have begun its leader with the very *un*-British sentiment, 'We much fear that the weather is now settled,' or that, towards the evening of the same day, the Esplanade party should have suspended proceedings, to question for a serious moment the intentions of a great black cloud which suddenly made its appearance, sailing in majestically from the sea. Alas! this also proved a delusive hope. It was the last dark flag that streamed at the rear of the too brief north-east monsoon; and the large shining drops of rain, so few that they might have been numbered, which it shed in the fleeting instant of its passage over the anxious crowd, only served to aggravate the universal feeling of chagrin.

In speaking of Madras and its hospitable denizens I have endeavoured to represent the condition in which I found them during my visit of a fortnight in the month of December. Of the circumstances under which they glow and simmer throughout the hot season (which means, I believe, with only some little variation of degree, the period between February or March and October), I have no personal knowledge. But *then*, according to all accounts, Anglo-Madras life and its surroundings are blighted together. Outside, the grass, sun-painted to the colour of straw, becomes dry and brittle; the very leaves of the trees droop languishingly, and a burden of hot dust lies ankle-deep on the highways.

Within-doors, the ornate black furniture, with its crowd of

carved figures, creaks and cracks as with sharp cries of complaint; matting shrinks and shrivels, as if seeking relief in smaller compass; and the leaves and boards of books curl and bend tortuously. Man pants and broils in a stifling atmosphere, and the earth proclaims from every pore the language of the dying warrior: 'I am athirst; give me to drink.'

The usual asylums from these throes of Nature are the higher platforms of the Shervaroy Hills and Bangalore, or the distant but more salubrious slopes of the Neilgherries, to one or other of which all betake themselves who have the opportunity; and thrice blessed to the pallid invalid is the railway system, which already conveys him to these comparatively cool retreats, and still continues to spread its network of health and comfort to oases beyond the fiery plains.

Of all the three Presidencies, Madras has been least subjected to the influx of change. In the south, more especially, where the country is isolated from the rest of India, the old scenes of its early history, and these alone, are still being enacted. Ancient laws and habits, which in Upper India were crushed under foot by Mohammedan and Mahratta invaders, there remain intact. The people themselves are a different race from those of the north, speaking other languages and dwelling in peace, comparatively ignorant of the outward world, in their remote land of magnificent old temples and time-hallowed shrines.

The history of British rule in Madras is distinguished by an able succession of governors and by recurring outbreaks of political feeling, the occasions of which happily exist no more. Several of the mercantile firms of the capital were among the earliest established in India. In the race of commercial pro-

gress, Madras has inevitably fallen behind Calcutta and Bombay ; but its merchants are now more fortunate than their ancestors, inasmuch as they are enabled to pursue their avocations tranquilly, undismayed by constant whisperings of internal rebellion, or the cry that some foe, such as Hyder or his son Tippoo, is within a short march of their homes burning the villages by the way.

One parting word of Madras with its little used, almost useless, pier and its large sea-borne trade, carried out and in through the swell of an open shore. Hitherto the foreign commerce of the Presidency has made fair progress, notwithstanding this tremendous obstacle, having been doubled, for example, during the time in which that of Bengal has increased threefold. But the railway system has wrought a startling change in the relative circumstances of the city, redeeming some of the richest portions of the country from that isolation in which they have hitherto existed. The completion of the line which will connect Madras with Bombay may be looked for in about a year hence, and then the west coast will offer to the central districts a more convenient outlet than the east, giving Bombay a decided superiority. Countervailing advantages, no doubt, are in prospect for Madras ; but who can doubt that the means of appropriating these must be sought in the construction of a seaport ? The wave of change, now sweeping the whole surface of the Indian continent, cannot indeed deprive this city of its ancient and honourable name as the seat of government in Southern India ; but if it is to retain, in any important sense, its pre-eminence as the commercial capital, there is immediate work to be done. Lord Napier has ordered the preparation of

plans for a breakwater, within which ships may find protection sufficient for the competitive purposes of trade : Madras merchants will surely be earnest and prompt in seeing this act of self-preservation carried into effect.

According to the Administration Report for 1867-8, the population of the whole Presidency had risen to 26,500,000, there being 213 souls to each square mile, a denser mass of human life than that of some European States. The Telegu and Tamil speaking peoples, of whom two-thirds of the whole number probably consist, are regarded as belonging to the more industrious and energetic order of Indian natives.



CHAPTER XXVI.

ORISSA.—THE SUNDERBUNDS.—THE HOOGLHY.—PORT CANNING.

The more honesty a man has, the less he affects the air of a saint.—LAVATER.

Where hopeless Anguish poured his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die.—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

As brooks make rivers, rivers run to seas.—DRYDEN.



BEFORE leaving Madras we had the misfortune to part with two friends (a married couple), who had been our steamboat companions all the way from England, and who now sailed for Calcutta in one of the steamers belonging to the British India Steam Navigation Company, in which the gentleman was a shareholder. I recall a circumstance so commonplace, and so uninteresting to all the world but the leave-taking party, because it affords occasion for a passing allusion to that company's splendid line of sea-going passenger-ships as a very notable example of maritime progress in the East. There is not, indeed, such another shipping enterprise apart from the Western world; for this fleet now supplies a strong and regular chain of communication along the whole east and west coasts of the Indian continent, from Calcutta on the one hand to Kurrachee on the other, besides connecting

the latter port with Bushire in the Persian Gulf and the former with Rangoon in Burmah, whence the route is further carried down the Straits of Malacca to Singapore. Although instituted no further back than the year 1856, with two steamers running between Calcutta and Burmah only, the concern had, in 1869, attained the magnitude of twenty-four steam vessels, with an aggregate capacity of fully 22,000 tons, and of 4,330 horse-power. The origin and successful progress of this noble scheme are due to the energy and enterprise of Messrs. Mackinnon, Mackenzie, and Company, of Calcutta and Glasgow.

In a few days afterwards the regular Calcutta steamer, punctual to time, came to anchor in the roads, and, along with several other passengers, we were once more borne through the surf to pass a few days on shipboard, with the lagging hours alternating between the society of unknown faces, crowned with blue veils and sun hats, and the seclusion of a little crib haunted by a creaking noise and a rushing sound of water.

It will be seen from the map that our course now lay up the Bay of Bengal, along the coast of the large province of Orissa—a name which recent events have rendered familiar to all who take any interest in the affairs of our great Indian empire. Comparatively small occasion might the world have otherwise had to think of Orissa, with its isolated population of 4,000,000, still dwelling apart in the shadow of a barbarous faith, amidst vast jungles, trackless forests, and deep, rolling rivers, haunted by monstrous forms of life—in a country, too, where the temperature during the hot season reaches 115° Fahr. in the shade, and whose plains are alternately withered by heat and flooded with water. Nor need Orissa receive much consideration from the

fact that it is the scene of that great temple of Juggernaut, which has drawn eager crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the



JUGGERNAUTH CAR.

country for the last 700 years. While we are passing the residence in chief of Juggernaut and his temple, however, it may be well to remember that he still exists, enthroned in state

like some demon of romance, within a large tower pertaining to that uncouth series of buildings, surmounted by a dome like an ancient pepperbox, which bear his name. The god himself is known as a rough, painted figure, about six feet high, with a very black face, great white eyes, a red mouth, a snout-like nose, and arms without hands. It need scarcely be added that the practice of self-immolation under the wheels of the idol's car on the recurring festival days, when he is dragged forth in triumph, has, thanks to the interference of our Government! ceased to exist; although, according to all accounts, the other time-honoured characteristics of the occasion remain unchanged. Above all, Juggernaut is still an object of interest and concern to the Indian Government; and this not only because the annual gathering of his votaries is rendered hideous by scenes of vice and obscenity. The Sanitary Commissioner for Bengal, who visited the shrine last year, gives a most deplorable account of the amount of disease and death resulting on that occasion from the terribly overcrowded state of Pooree with its 6,363 houses, constituting the only accommodation for the great multitude of visitors, apart from an ordinary population of from 25,000 to 30,000. It has been ascertained that the festival of 1868 attracted about 50,000 pilgrims to Pooree from every quarter, and that the consequence was a loathsome mass of corruption, both moral and physical, on which no one would desire to dwell. Circumstances now render it reasonable to suppose, that this monstrous tragedy of ages is at last drawing to a close. Still, however, it is one of the facts of to-day that Juggernaut reigns at Pooree, where he is attended by 640 servitors, who prepare his couch, put him to sleep, awake him, supply him with food, wash his robes, and acquaint him with the

course of events. The temples of Pooree are said to contain 120 dancing girls, together with 3,000 priests and *pandahs*, the latter being a depraved class of wretches, who, professing to supply the people with food prepared in the temple, shrink from no species of iniquity to secure their personal aggrandizement.

But Orissa was lately the subject of a tale of famine more ter-



FAMINE IN ORISSA.

rible and devastating even than such horrors as these. The dreadful story, indeed, has scarcely yet been told ; but some idea of its nature may be gathered from the reports of the Relief Committee, wherein we find details to the effect that men in the last stage of weakness were offering all they possessed for a handful of rice, and hungry women bartering their jewels for a meal ; that, according to the most reliable estimate, about

1,000,000 out of a population of 4,000,000 perished ; and that at one period no fewer than 18,146 helpless orphans alone were dependent on the Committee for the means of existence !

A tragedy of this character in some modified sense is not new to Orissa, or unknown in other parts of India. It was wont, however, to be regarded by the Mohammedan rulers in a passive spirit as inevitable, being 'the act of God,' and the fact that Sir Cecil Beadon was so much blamed for the want of anticipatory measures in the case before us is an earnest of the better prospects of the people under British dominion. The wisdom and forethought of all the Moguls, in their government of Orissa, were as nothing compared with that searching examination of its affairs which was rendered by the late Commission of Enquiry, headed by Mr. George Campbell ; and the extensive operations presently going on in the way of irrigation works, embankment buildings, and road-making, including the completion, now nearly effected, of a Grand Trunk Road connecting the Madras frontier with Calcutta, will, it may be expected, serve at once to bring the people of Orissa more under the influence of our institutions, and infinitely to diminish the sufferings which the physical character of such a country entails.

Recurring seasons of drought have ever been the terror and the scourge of India. To distribute economically and usefully the water supply in a hot, parching land is now the principal anxiety of a humane Government, and gigantic arrangements to that end are everywhere in force. After all is done, however, the cry of the people will still be for rain—rain, which saves the wasting crops, renews the demand for labour, and averts from millions of humble households the horrors of impend-

ing famine. We hear, not without interest, from time to time of rain having fallen in some portion of India, brightening our mercantile prospects by reviving the sun-stricken soil ; but we do not and cannot realize the extent to which that chief of earthly blessings in such a country affects the lot of the labouring poor.

The terrible force and significance of the calamity set forth in the following impressive lines, which appeared in the ' Calcutta Englishman ' of June last, can only be appreciated by those who have some practical acquaintance with the ' thirsty land,' whence the ' prayer ' has emanated :—

A PRAYER.

The thirsty land is lying scorch'd and dreary,
O'er hill and valley and outstretched plain ;
The hearts of men are waxing faint and weary—
God send Thy rain !

From humble homesteads, where the fierce heat burneth
The poor man's crops, and withers all his grain,
In answer to Thy wrath, the cry returneth—
God send Thy rain !

From rich men's houses, and where wealth has power
To purchase comfort and to lessen pain,
Voices from sickbeds crave the healing shower—
God send thy rain !

Death the destroyer is abroad and reaping
His summer harvest—many are the slain !
Lover of all men ! hear the mourners weeping—
God send thy rain !

All Nature prays Thee—trees and plants and flowers,
The cattle searching for their food in vain,
Mutely appeal within these scorching hours—
God send thy rain !

If thus in asking, forgotten is Thy teaching,
That all is order'd only for Man's gain,
Father, we bow even in our strong beseeching—
God send thy rain !

But the thirsty land lieth scorch'd and dreary,
O'er hill and valley and outstretched plain ;
The hearts of men are waxing faint and weary—
God send Thy rain !

We now approach the place where, during some months of the year, the Ganges and Brahmapootra rivers, by their various mouths, pour into the Bay of Bengal millions of tons of water every hour. The deltas thus formed by the enormous deposits of silt carried down from the Himalayas and the plains on either side of these rapid streams are extending gradually into the sea. Undoubtedly a great geographical change is in progress here, its past scenes pointing to the plains of Bengal under water, its future to the present bay of that name a portion of *terra firma*. The strange border of territory, ninety miles in depth, called the Sunderbunds, that here separates Calcutta from the sea, is being slowly brought under cultivation, fully 2,000 square miles out of the 6,000 of a fertile area which it contains having been ploughed since Lord Dalhousie's time. But on the whole it is yet a land of swamps and pestilence, affording no means of access to the city of palaces by any of its channels save that of the Hooghly.

As I write, what is called the 'Sunderbund problem' is being discussed in the columns of the Calcutta journals. A general desire apparently exists that Government should, for the purposes of discovery and reclamation, organize an exploration of this mysterious region, wherein it is asserted (although perhaps without sufficient data) that archæological ruins indicating the sites of ancient cities have been discovered. The stories told by a few adventurous sportsmen of its pathless woods and swift-flowing rivers are fascinating and romantic.

Elsewhere, nearer the mouths of the Ganges, the aspect of Nature must resemble that of a world in one of the earlier geological stages of its formation, peopled with congenial forms of life. Adjutants, marabouts, cranes, and pelicans, the inhabitants proper of such a land, exist in great number and variety, stalking through the waste of mud and water, on high stilt-like legs, intent on devouring the fish that abound in every pool and channel.

As a soil so soft and plashy affords no foundation for human dwellings, the native huts, sparsely sprinkled over its surface, rest on elevations formed of reeds and branches; and the mystery of the situation consists in the occupants of these marshy abodes finding here that remunerative employment which it is so difficult to procure in places having less humidity and a firmer footing. Fowlers as well as fishermen, they possess in such a spot a fruitful field of labour. Birds innumerable, including, besides those I have named, the king-fisher, the flamingo, and the wild goose, are captured by ingenious contrivances for the sake of their feathers, for which there is always a ready market in Calcutta. The long reeds and canes form the materials of mats and baskets, while the mussels, sea-snails, and other crustacea, of which there is also an inexhaustible store, are converted into lime.

Much controversy exists regarding the prospective condition of the Hooghly, which, apparently shallower than it once was, occasionally threatens to become altogether unnavigable for large ships, thus keeping the numerous representatives of a trade amounting to between forty and fifty millions sterling in a state of chronic uneasiness.

In recent times, during the administration of Lord Dalhousie, something like a panic prevailed on this subject, and measures were inaugurated under his auspices to render available the only visible means of escape from a catastrophe so appalling as the isolation of Calcutta from the sea. Fortunately for Bengal, such an opportunity is really afforded by the river Mutlah, one of the mouths of the Ganges, by which large vessels may advance to within twenty-eight miles of Calcutta; and a company, formed for the purpose a few years ago, succeeded, by dint of draining the swampy land, in constructing a suitable port near the head of the inlet. A railway also was formed thence to the city itself; but, unfortunately, after the expenditure of three-quarters of a million sterling on these projects, it was found that malaria, destructive to the crews of European ships, rendered the place uninhabitable in its existing state, and that unless new and widely extended measures were adopted, the Hooghly, so long as it remained open, would be the preferable way of access.

Thus Port Canning, with the foundations of a projected new city lying in waste around it, stands in the meantime a monument of disappointment and misfortune. Much difference of opinion exists as to the proper action of the Government in the emergency. But, pending the settlement of this question, we know that the trade of Calcutta has been doubled in each of the last two decades, and may reasonably conclude that if the Hooghly is gradually closing, as surely as its commerce is expanding, Port Canning, forsaken as it now is, will have an important place in the future history of Hindostan.

As we proceeded, the vicinity of the Hooghly became apparent in the increasing impurity of the sea. The river, which is

about eight or ten miles wide at the entrance, gradually contracts, and at Calcutta is less than three-quarters of a mile across. We were agreeably surprised to find that the scenery of the banks was not so tame and uninteresting as we had been led to expect. Our progress against the stream was, no doubt, tediously slow, but we encountered many warm, green pictures of richly-wooded banks, with quiet little creeks winding into the



COOLIE HUT, BENGAL.

landscape, and huts of reed and matting embowered among the trees. Canoe-shaped passenger boats, severally styled *dinghy*, *boghlio*, and *pansway*, came successively into view, propelled at great speed down the rapid stream, together with sailing craft of primitive construction and ludicrous appearance, one class being like floating hayricks or reed houses which the current had pilfered from the banks. In some of these, a gang of black figures, crowded together at a low projection in front, toiled

against the tide with spoon-like oars ; while others were barely moving by the unaided instrumentality of a square sail. Occasionally a steamboat appeared, breaking the surrounding silence with the sounds so familiar on the Clyde or Thames, and matted all over like a large aquatic tent, beneath which a sheeted throng of passengers found shelter from the sun. One of the most crowded among them was, we were told, freighted with pilgrims bound to the Temple of Juggernaut, which, by attracting devotees from all quarters, contributes periodically to swell the traffic of the Hooghly.

At this period of the year—the height of the cool season—our ship was naturally thronged with passengers, many of them bound to up-country stations, even beyond Delhi, and having thus the prospect before them of a long, tedious journey after arriving at Calcutta. Agreeable ladies and gentlemen, generously bent on rendering hospitality to strangers, did us the honour of making our acquaintance ; but only, alas ! for a brief period, and thus through the bright memories of such scenes of travel there runs just this shadow of alloy—that friendships, which we would fain cultivate, and which under other circumstances might endure for life, become lost for ever ere they are well begun.

It happened that no individual among the passengers was, so to speak, afloat in life but ourselves. Each and all were going ‘home’ somewhere, to assume or resume their places in the commercial, military, or legal systems of the country. In the case of some, the magic word must have acquired a painfully altered signification ; for the household evils incidental to Anglo-Indian society can only be known to those by whom they must needs be borne. We had more than one father on

board who had left a sick wife and children in the British Isles, and was now on his way back to that distant dwelling, which their presence alone had made happy. Our catalogue of social miseries included the story of a mother, still young, who had been obliged (the exigencies of business detaining her husband in India) to proceed to England alone in company with a prostrate boy, and who was now returning to rejoin her husband and other children in Calcutta. But, even such cases apart, it would be a great mistake to suppose that the prevailing feeling here was that with which the Honourable Mrs. Norton thus pleasantly invests the situation :—

Our palm-trees are there with their stately stems ;
Our birds have a plumage like coloured gems ;
The fire-flies shine when the world's at rest,
And the lotus gleams bright on the Ganges' breast.
Oh ! there lies a warm glory beyond the sea—
Hindoostan, Hindoostan, we return to thee !

For it has been found in Anglo-Indian experience that the sparkle of fire-flies or bright-coloured birds is not so alluring as the longed-for glance of absent eyes, while the 'warm glory,' here so attractively set forth, is, in point of fact, undesirably bright and glaring. Although, however, we were not quite so sprightly a party as the romance of the position might imply, incidents naturally arose which imparted some variety to the ordinary monotony of the voyage—the all-pervading vibration of the ship, the incessant sound of rushing water, the engines' ceaseless play, the daily lounge under the awning, and the nightly glory of the stars.

The lovers of music, for example, were charmed by the performances of a lady passenger, peculiarly accomplished in

the art. Her instrument, which was only a small harmonium, occupying a corner in the captain's cabin, responded to her practised touch with a volume and purity of sound that flooded the ship with melody. I have seldom heard the music of Italy sung with finer taste and execution, and never in circumstances so interesting and welcome. This lady had naturally a number of admiring auditors surrounding her—a circumstance which may possibly have helped a few of the others to arrive at the conviction they expressed, that she must have been 'of the musical profession.' However that might be, she was accompanying her husband to his station in a lonely part of Burmah, where such a vocation would be as useless as it is rare; and we learn from the incident itself, that the inspiring strains of Verdi and Bellini, being among the products of Europe exported to the Far East, may probably be heard to advantage in the vicinity of Buddhist temples and sweltering groves of palms.

Twice in the day a strange and solemn scene was enacted on the poop, whither, at the orthodox hours, a Mohammedan passenger repaired to pray with his face towards Mecca, which happened to be in the direction of the sun. This gentleman was a rich shipowner in Calcutta, who frequently made such voyages in the pursuit of his business. His originally dark hair and whiskers were, according to the custom of his peculiar tribe, converted by some dye-stuff into a dingy red colour—a practice which we can scarcely condemn as barbarous in Islam while in Christendom we have also our 'fashionable colour,' designed to replace the natural hue. But, this process of disfigurement notwithstanding, our fellow voyager was a comely personage, carefully clad in purple and fine linen, with a well-

featured countenance beneath his high yellow turban, and a small handsome bare foot within his fine morocco slipper. His steps were closely attended by a servant, who had acquired the art of adapting himself to his master's movements, as if he were the other's very shadow. To the unaccustomed eye, therefore, the diurnal performance on the poop had a most ludicrous appearance in spite of its sacred character. The ceremony began by the attendant laying down a little mat, on which his master stood and knelt alternately, clasping and outspreading his hands or stroking his beard, while he recited, or rather muttered, with all possible rapidity, a prolonged routine of prayers. These several exercises were devoutly copied by the servant, stationed close behind, who, slim and supple as an acrobat, slid down and rose up simultaneously with his master, joining or extending his hands, elevating his eyes, and mumbling his prayers with an exactitude of imitation that might have passed for mockery, but for the lugubrious gravity of his face. The scene, indeed, became quite dramatic, as the two figures, standing alone on their elevation above the sea, caught the ruby glare of the setting sun, towards which their faces were turned, and charged it, as it sank from view, with the burden of their dreary invocations.

These, no doubt, were righteous men in their way, for long prayers are appropriately prescribed by the Koran to those who would enjoy its lengthened list of delights in Paradise. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the part of the faithful follower is fairly open to criticism. His look indeed, unlike that of the other, was somewhat inane, and it certainly did appear that, if he ever expected to get to heaven, it was by following at his master's heels!

CHAPTER XXVII.

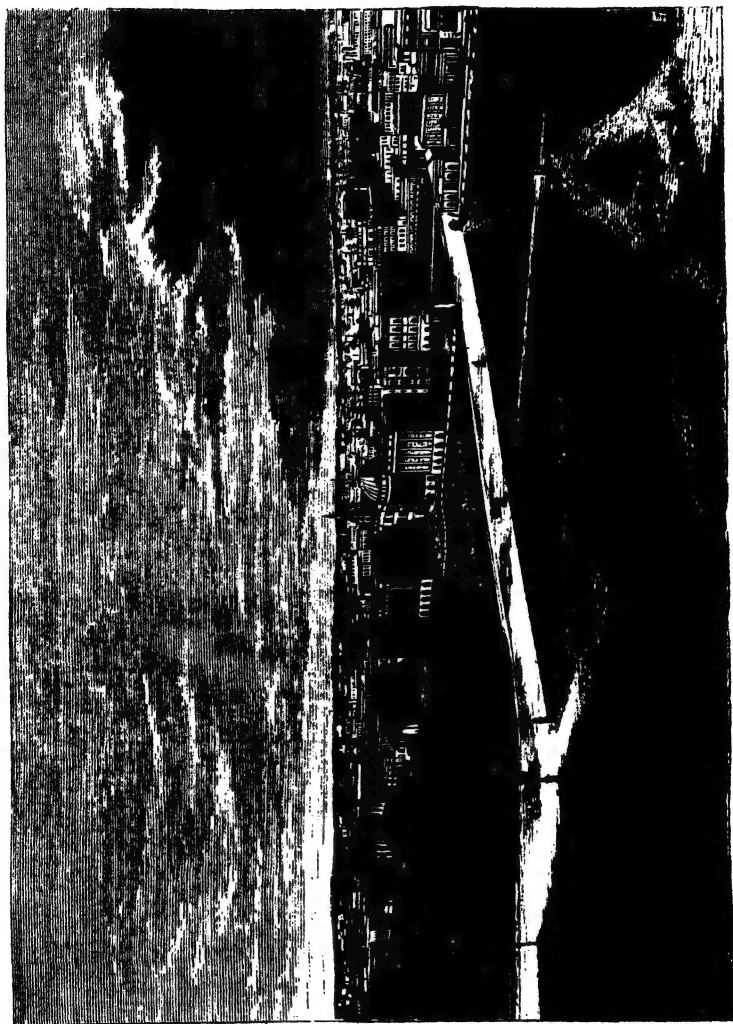
THE CAPITAL OF INDIA.

Here Wealth still swells the golden tide,
 As busy Trade his labour plies;
 There Architecture's noble pride
 Bids elegance and splendour rise.—BURNS.



Length began that hum and bustle of preparation which ever attends the near termination of a sea voyage. There was great excitement among the passengers; and well there might be, for long and far-severed friends—husbands, wives, parents, and children—were about to meet in each other's embrace. As we approached Garden Reach, the view had become diversified with handsome dwellings and flowery parterres, and, at the landing-place, as we dropped anchor, we found congregated, under the sheltering roof of a large shed, the expectant friends of those who were happy in such a possession.

The deck was crowded with voyagers, the shed was thronged with their relatives, and an animated scene ensued as the parties confronted one another. Such a simultaneous interchange of loving salutes, such a gleaming and straining of eyes directed to different points of the large assembly on shore, such reciprocal



kissing of hands and waving of handkerchiefs, were all illustrative of the oft-sung truism that

‘Absence makes the heart grow fonder.’

Then came a throng of boats to the ship’s side—a rush of numbers up the steep gangway, and a commingling of the actors in the recent pantomime. Here, however, I must drop the curtain on a scene so sacred as that where grown men, young and old, are fairly sobbing aloud for very joy in the arms of those from whom they have been so long severed.

The appearance of Calcutta, approached from Garden Reach, is decidedly that of a ‘city of palaces.’ It may be described in a sentence as an immense crescent (perhaps two miles in extent) mainly formed of elegant white buildings, having flat ornamented roofs and broad balconies; this view, adorned by several spires and intermingled with rich foliage, forming the magnificent boundary line of a wide, noble park, extending from the banks of the river with its forest of tall masts. The park itself (or Maidan, as it is called) is intersected through its whole level surface by pathways, garden enclosures, and wide carriage drives bordered with stone balustrades.

Here the eye takes in at a glance the best portion of the city, including *Chowringhee* (the handsome ‘West End’), Government House and offices, with other public edifices. The Maidan, which, in consequence of being the public exercise ground, has been appropriately styled the ‘lungs of Calcutta,’ might with equal propriety have been called its strong arm; for here stands Fort William, encircled by green ramparts, and wide entrenchments—an impregnable little city of soldiers,

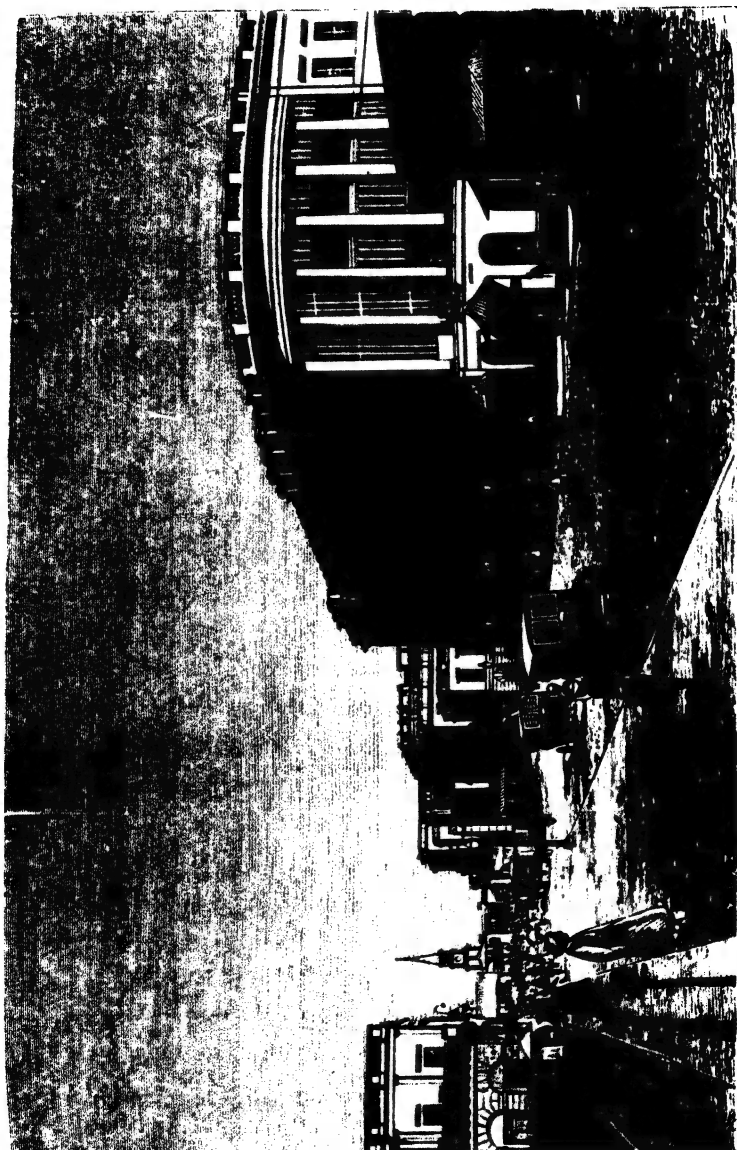
bristling all over with guns, and well stored with British means and appliances of offensive and defensive warfare. Here, too, is 'the Course,' the scene of that afternoon gathering, which of itself is something worth visiting Calcutta to witness.

Turning now to the river, from the mud banks of which we are supposed to have taken this survey, we find it crowded with shipping along the whole line of the city. Some of the finest



LANDING AT CALCUTTA.

vessels in the world enhance the display; for in these days our shipowners, competing with one another in so important a market, have found that the craft which conveyed the industry of our forefathers to Indian ports are now too small *to pay*. Nevertheless, these magnificent ships, strangely enough, are all anchored in the river, grasping its slimy bed with huge iron flukes, and landing and receiving their cargoes, by means of small boats, with much labour and expense. It seems ridi-



OLD COURT HOUSE STREET, CALCUTTA.

culous that a port which, for the extent and value of its tonnage, is exceeded by few others in the world should be thus unprovided, not only with quays, but even with landing-jetties. Yet now, at the end of 1869, so it is, and has ever been. At length, however, Government has pronounced the doom of this anomaly, by inviting tenders for the construction of jetties; and, although the proposed scheme is generally regarded as inadequate to the exigencies of the case, it is at least a step in the right direction. There is also a project under consideration for connecting the two banks of the river by a floating-bridge at Howrah, the 'Surrey Side' of Calcutta.

It is only, indeed, during the last few years that any important practical innovation has been made in the *statu quo* of that entire century, during which the capital of British India remained one of the most inconvenient and unhealthy places within its bounds. Now gas has been introduced throughout the city proper, and pipes are being laid down for the purpose of supplying pure water to its population of 377,924. Of these inhabitants the European and Indo-European classes (nearly equal in number) together amount to about 22,000, and the Hindoos to 239,000; while the remainder, in addition to Mohammedans, comprises Armenians, Greeks, Jews, Chinese, Africans, and Parsees—the population being thus of a much more heterogeneous character than that of Bombay or Madras. The fairer parts of Calcutta have already been cleared, through the formation of spacious streets and squares, of the filthy *bustees* or hamlets that cumbered them like a growth of fungi, while a system of drainage is in progress which will, when completed, compass about two-thirds of the town. In a list of 'civil build-

ings,' just finished or in course of erection, the latest Bengal Administration Report mentions the 'Sailors' Home,' the 'Post Office,' the 'Imperial Museum,' and the 'New Calcutta University.' Among other contemplated institutions, we hear of a Pauper Hospital to shelter 400 patients, and a Lock Hospital, intended for the relief of fallen women, who are said to exist in the city and suburbs to the number of about 9,000. The Hooghly itself has not been neglected; those ghastly burdens, in the form of half-consumed corpses, with which it was daily wont to roll—towards the sea, as our eyes told us—towards heaven, in the fancy of the weak Hindoo, having been withdrawn from its current. Burning ghauts (mere blank spaces enclosed by high walls) still occupy sites on the bank, for there is no need of interference with the ancient rite of which they are the temples. It has lately been enacted, however, that the fires which blaze and crackle within shall be made to do their work *thoroughly*; and, further, a furnace erected at the public expense now extinguishes with swift-consuming flames the bodies of the poor departed whose friends lack the means of doing them that final service.

Thus the capital of our Indian empire is a much more suitable and healthy place for the important purpose it subserves than it was five years ago, or at any former time; and although great improvements are still needful and possible, the growing necessity that existed for removing the Government headquarters to some more salubrious situation has been checked, and is now less urgent. We must infer that the 'city proper,' to which I have alluded, comprises only a part of what is usually understood by the 'population of Calcutta.'

A writer in the 'Friend of India' calculates that, during the past century, the entire inhabitants, including those of the suburban and Howrah municipalities, 'have increased from a quarter of a million to upwards of a million, the pure European residents from five hundred to twenty thousand, and the mixed and other Christians from seven hundred to twenty thousand.' The same journal lately published the following list of those inhabitants who paid the local licence tax in the previous year, as affording 'an idea of the population of the business quarter of the city :—

98	Joint-stock Companies.
571	Merchants and Agents, Bankers and Wholesale Traders.
64	Banians.
139	Miscellaneous Dealers.
181	Brokers.
104	Members of the Legal Profession.
76	Medical Practitioners and Apothecaries.
44	Bazars and Screws.
7	Engineers and Architects.
9	Auctioneers.
2,073	Miscellaneous Traders in 3rd class.
114	Pawnbrokers.
6,097	Retail Dealers in 4th class.
14,181	Ditto ditto 5th class.
6,740	Itinerant Dealers.

But we know precisely that of the whole foreign trade of British India, amounting, as has been stated, last year to the magnificent sum of 101,000,000*l.* sterling, that of Calcutta alone constituted about one-third.

The breadth and cleanliness of the main streets, with their refreshing green squares and vistas, afford an agreeable change to the eye that has been accustomed to the ordinary aspect of Eastern cities. The dust which would otherwise render even such thoroughfares disagreeable is kept down by a large staff

of *bheesties*, or water-carriers, each bearing his *mussack*, an object resembling at a short distance the form of a full-grown pig. The *mussack* is, however, a thing formed of leather, or the skin of an animal preserved in its entirety, and filled with water. This useful and laborious service in Indian towns, with its salary and emoluments, amounting in all to 8*l* or 10*l* per annum, is of course fulfilled by Mohammedans, the Hindoo as a rule being



THE BHEESTIE.

inaccessible in respect of all functions connected with animal flesh.

Hence the heterogeneous constitution and ridiculous rules of domestic service throughout the country. The lithe fellow who wields the broom will perhaps shrink from touching a dish which had been used for the family dinner. If a rigid Brahminist, he will guard his own food from the slightest contact

with alien hands. He may start at the sound of his master's voice, or cringe and crawl as if he were unworthy to stand before him, but may nevertheless choose to treat the great *sahib's* very shadow as pollution, by secretly casting away the meal of rice on which it had chanced to fall.

It was, I suppose, on the principle of anything which is perfectly novel constituting a source of attraction, that on entering the business quarter of Calcutta our attention was first arrested by an indescribable chorus of rasping, squeaking sounds which seemed to pervade it throughout. This proved to be an industrial melody, produced by the bullock *hackries* or carts which traversed the thoroughfares, conducting the heavy traffic of the city, and these vehicles being roughly constructed of bamboo, had a dry neglected axle of that material, which thus brayed and whimpered ludicrously, after the manner of a donkey under the pressure of the burden. Each *hackrie* was drawn by a pair of bullocks of the country, attached together by a pole laid across the neck immediately in front of the hump, and sustaining the entire weight of the load—a load in most cases so excessive that the animals visibly writhed under the pain it inflicted. It was apparent indeed, not in a few but in many instances, that the pole had gashed the creatures' necks as with a butcher's cleaver, and was working with every step they took still deeper into the bleeding wound, while the letters or characters with which each animal was branded had been so brutally impressed as to be literally *written in blood!*

About the time of which I speak a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals had been formed in Calcutta, and under its humane action, I believe, a great reformation has recently

been effected. I regret to add, however, that we found such an association required with at least equal urgency in other parts of the country; the lower orders of the people, regarded in a wide sense, being to all appearance savagely indifferent to the sufferings of the animals under their charge.

With those who may deem this matter too trivial for a place in any sketch of the leading features of the Indian capital, I am content to join issue. Feeling for the lower creation apart, we at least profess an interest in the welfare of the insensate wretch—I had almost said the inferior animal—who thus wields his power over gentle beasts of burden (their necks, it may be, streaming with blood), as he sits behind on the grinding instrument of torture alluded to, accelerating their progress by the stroke of a bludgeon. A righteous Government cannot fulfil its mission in Calcutta or elsewhere without frowning down enormities which, however natural to the ignorant native, or rooted in the habits of his race, are not the less an outrage on that higher civilization the virtues and blessings of which we are inviting him to share.

Touching the *hackrie* itself, which first so loudly claimed our notice, it may be added that groaning axle as well as suffering bullock has been taken under legal protection, the municipality—unable, we may imagine, to hear the music of their own voices for the creaking din outside—having recently passed a measure compelling the owners of these noisy vehicles to keep them quiet by a soothing process of lubrication!

The business streets of Calcutta are entirely composed of the usual large 'go-downs' of European traders, and are either connected in direct lines with the river, or situated on its banks,

where the scene to be witnessed of public storehouses and auction buildings, rows of sheds having piles of merchandise within, bustle of carts and carriers, steamers still or moving, and a crowd of cargo-boats noisily swarming round great ships anchored in the stream, may be regarded as broadly resembling a view of the Thames at Wapping.

But the native portion of the city presents a picture of human existence which has no parallel in Western life. Rows of low brick buildings, serving as shops and storerooms, earthen huts, cottages formed of cane and mats, together with wooden dwellings sustained on bamboo piles, all confusedly mingled, run on for miles, the narrow street between being of course crowded and noisy, as well as stifling with heat and dust. Here in small lowly recesses, or in lofts girt with a swaddling band of matting to protect the inmates from the sun, the unvarying round of poor Indian households proceeds from day to day, whole families, down, it may be, to the third generation, dwelling under the same roof. While passing along we could perceive some of the female members of the community, doomed to seclusion by the tyranny of their creed, inspecting through the chinks of such frail prison-houses the sundry interesting phases of the hubbub below. It was to be presumed, of course, that the male portion of these teeming households were absent on their several vocations, wherefore the licence existing in such a place for mothers and daughters to look forth on the light of heaven, even through these 'loopholes of retreat.'

Interspersed, however, among the prevailing crowd of such habitations, a few stately mansions appear, looking strangely out of place beside their rickety neighbours. These are the

residences of some of the wealthy baboos of Calcutta, by whom a multitude of noisy neighbours and a plethora of dirt and dust are seemingly not regarded as subversive of social dignity. On the contrary, it is said that the situation is considered by some of these magnates conducive to that end, on the principle that magnitude is rendered more imposing by contrast.

But a *pukka* house is by no means regarded as a necessary possession among the wealthy; opulence is wont to content itself with the glitter of jewellery. In the bazaars of Calcutta, with their long rows of confined shops packed closely together like the cells of a beehive, and filled with all the handiworks of Europe and Asia, prosperous traders, squatting patiently throughout the day on earthen floors in dusty dens, live and die without a thought of turning their means to those purposes in life which are to the world at large the grand stimulus to industry—the golden future of toil.

In some cases, indeed, extensive dealers in goods and produce, who are worth six, seven, or eight lacs of rupees, dwell in garrets such as English philanthropy would scarcely assign to paupers. During a visit to one of the chief emporiums of the piece-goods bazaar-men, I was conducted through a narrow lane and up a shaky stair to a large square gallery open to the sky, and overlooking a court below, in which, as the 'go-down' or store-room of the establishment, a number of men were employed in packing bales and boxes for transmission to the interior.

Above this gallery, on projecting ledges thick with dust, large flower-pots, in every state of dilapidation from tear and wear, held drooping plants in all stages of suffocation from the heat; and a cloud of pigeons, those birds of good omen in the

estimation of many, hovered in the blazing sunlight that pervaded the place. Around it, within a series of diminutive chambers entered by corresponding doors, the several dealers, alone, or with their partners in trade, were engaged in examining patterns, comparing samples, and following out that monotonous



PIECE-GOODS MERCHANTS.

round of business which constitutes the single pleasure of their lives. Here, lolling on couches or sitting in characteristic postures among their cloths and papers, we found the objects of our search, who received us with that welcome which, to their credit be it spoken, is always accorded to visitors. The

apartment bore a precise resemblance to a child's toy-house ; something, or rather anything, with a glitter being stuck into every available crevice and corner. Even the iron safe which held the receipts and rupees did duty also as the gilded ornament of a wall that was embellished with a hideous crew of paint and porcelain divinities staring down upon the inmates. Thanks to the supposed influence of this angelic host within doors, and the flock of pigeons without, our business friends looked forward to a continued course of prosperity, or at least could console themselves with the reflection that they had not neglected the legitimate means of securing it.

These merchants were all trimly attired in the usual white toga, and wore head-dresses of various designs, their hands being generally decorated with valuable rings, which, as I have already said, are possessions of themselves sufficient to confer dignity and importance on the wearer. Jewellery, indeed, would appear to be the natural concomitant of wealth in every Indian household.

It may be interesting to notice that the piece-goods merchants in Calcutta are chiefly Marwarries—'up-country' men—acting either as traders on their own account, or as agents for northern buyers ; and all with the same object in view—to make money wherewith to return, that they may spend the autumn of their lives and meet death at home.

While speaking of Bombay, I alluded to the great opulence of some of its native traders ; and of course such fortunate dealers are also numerous in Calcutta. One of the merchant princes there had died a few years before, bequeathing to his family property to a very large amount, acquired in the course

of transactions the history of which would supply the materials of a new Eastern romance. The tale would open precisely like that of Alnaschar in the 'Arabian Nights,' with the hero in possession of nothing more valuable than a basket of crockery-ware (in this case precisely a stock of beer-bottles) on his first start in life, and might serve as an illustration *per contra* of the same moral lesson.

It need not then excite surprise that diamonds as well as diapers should be among the exports to India of articles suited to the native consumption, nor that many a gem, which by reason of its heavy value slips through the alabaster fingers of European aristocracy, should find a resting-place on the swarthy digits of some half-draped East Indian. But are we therefore to conclude that neither is the gleam of jewellery, wheresoever it may be encountered, one of the lights peculiar to civilization; nor the love of it, by whomsoever displayed, one of the necessary signs of human elevation and refinement?

In the business haunts of Calcutta, as the nucleus of North-Western commerce, we naturally encounter a fresh variety of race and costume. Some brown faces now mingle with the black, and, side by side with the feeblar form of the Bengalee, strong, thickly clad, bearded figures of Afghans who have travelled thus far with shawls from Cashmere, and fruits and spices from Cabool, afford in their own stalwart persons a striking example of the wide difference existing among Indian communities. These men leave their camels to await their return at Delhi, more than 1,000 miles behind, whence they now take the railway to Calcutta, and there, following in a troop at the heels of an interpreter, perambulate the European 'go-downs' in social

parties to select the cotton stripe prints and the few other articles which they carry back to their country in exchange for its own merchandise. The bargaining process is here also frequently conducted between the broker and buyer by signs made with joined hands under cover of a cloth, the purchaser first making his offer. That ancient commercial anomaly the 'Banyan' is still to be found in some houses, regulating their transactions, and even employing several of the native clerks, his own recompense being a commission, according to arrangement, on the amount of sales and purchases. No doubt the system of employing the 'broker' alone is now more prevalent; but with only the addition of some gift, which that functionary usually receives at the commencement of the Doorga Poojah holidays from the firm he serves, he also is remunerated by a small commission from the purchaser. I need scarcely add that such business rules do not exist in these days through the choice of British mercantile firms in India but of necessity, the force of native habit in this matter having so far resisted the innovating hand of change.

But the extensive commercial system created by Anglo-Indian houses has now opened a wide door of industry to the people themselves; as witness in each establishment, besides its large working staff, the numerous company of sleek native clerks who, with closely cropped black hair and priest-like vestments, sit round the desks engaged with the voluminous penmanship of the day. There is generally no lack of bustle, in these places the buying and selling dealers constantly moving out and in, while the *sahibs* of the establishment go forth into the sunshine, when go they must, pleasantly reclining within the shade of the

'*palki*,' which with its attendant bearers is always waiting at the door, or mount and descend the stair leading to that comfortable dwelling-house on the flat above, where rest and refreshment await them.

Nevertheless, the shadows of fanaticism and superstition still mingle with the brighter prospect thus unfolded. While of course there are many Indian traders who eschew the visionary in their transactions, it is strange to observe how widely the laws of modern commerce are blended with the vagaries of Indian usage. The belief of my shrewd constituents of the bazaar in the charm of a flock of pigeons is a moderate fancy compared with other delusions which are cherished with equal confidence. Nor is the practical influence of all these confined to their native sphere. In the present year, Glasgow shippers of certain fancy goods were advised by their correspondents in Calcutta that such fabrics would be unsaleable for a time, the cause not being one of those which regulate the laws of supply and demand as indicated by Adam Smith or any similar economist, but being due solely to the fact that March and April were held to be unlucky months for marriages, as predicated by the priesthood of Benares. Indian lovers, thus forewarned, prudently declined being united till the ill-fated period had run its course, and so the calico chintz flowers and bright-coloured peacocks intended to adorn them on the occasion must needs be regarded in the interval as useless stock. Perhaps, however, it is not for us in Scotland to rebuke too sternly this particular phase of Hindoo superstition, seeing that, for similar reasons of our own, we are accustomed to neglect the hymeneal altar during the month of May!

But not to multiply examples, here is the story of the good

ship 'F—— R——,' the proprietor of which was a respectable Mohammedan gentleman—a shipowner who, in the popular phrase, 'flourished' in Calcutta some years ago, and whose own beard wagged to the recital of the details as they fell from his lips in the hearing of my informant.

One day the 'F—— R——' left the Hooghly for England with a general cargo, and my friend, who was wont to engage in shipping transactions with the owner, had remonstrated with him in vain on the prejudice he entertained against insuring the vessel and her freight. 'How can I do such a thing?' was the reply. 'It is part of my faith and daily confession to put my trust in Providence. I have given the ship a name which signifies the "gift of God to His poor slave"; to insure her would be to violate my avowed principles.'

It may be that Abdul felt his position the stronger that he had hitherto escaped without loss, but as on this occasion time passed without bringing the usual intelligence of or from the ship, he became uneasy, and, eventually giving way, expressed a desire to insure at any reasonable premium. But to insure was now an impossibility, and as successive mails from England arrived without bringing any notice of the ship or her arrival, she was finally given up for lost. Strange to say however, at this juncture, a native underwriter suddenly appeared on the scene offering to insure the ship and cargo at a premium of twenty-five per cent. As it afterwards transpired, the unexpected negotiator had acted under the inspiration of a dream, in which, during the preceding night, he had spied the 'F—— R——' careering in full sail within a short distance of London! But as, in the mer-

cantile community to which he belonged, this seer enjoyed the reputation of being literally a far-seeing fellow, Abdul, shrewdly conjecturing that he had somehow become informed of the ship's safety, took fresh courage, and, instead of closing with the other on the terms offered, as would otherwise have been desirable, essayed to beat him down to fifteen per cent. Thus a week or two passed in higgling, until a mail again arrived without any tidings of the vessel, thus dispelling the night vision of the would-be underwriter, who now not only declined Abdul's eager offer to insure on the terms first offered, but peremptorily refused to have anything whatever to do with the unfortunate 'F——R——.' The old man was frantic at the loss to which his cupidity had subjected him, and the passing months having gradually confirmed the apprehension he had for some time entertained, that he would never see or hear more of the ship, eventually assured his adviser that he would for the future insure his shipments even to the extent of '*a basket of potatoes, and that protected by the average clause!*'

It were a waste of time to dwell on the superstitious observances of the Indian capital; for even were the subject a fresh one, no great interest can belong to ridiculous details born of Oriental fancy.

Among Indian festivals, however, great importance attaches to the Doorga Poojah and Juggernaut *Melas* of Bengal. These, happily for Calcutta commerce, occur only once a year. The former especially is the signal for a general holiday. It is wholly free from those monstrous and objectionable ceremonies which distinguish the system in general, being in fact an occasion of family reunion not unlike our own Christmastide, when the

scattered members of the flock meet together to cultivate sentiments of filial love and duty, and to offer their devotions at the altar of the ancestral god.

The Juggernaut festival, as held at Serampore (the most sacred place but one for its celebration), becomes the occasion of a regular fair, frequented by dancers and ballad-singers, as well as by traders from all parts of the district, who drive a brisk business in the current descriptions of Indian wares. Venerated by a large section of the Hindoo community, as this time-honoured occasion undoubtedly is, it now appears to have taken the comparatively innocent form of a large, jolly gathering of holiday seekers. Even the inmates of the Zenana, to whom this kind of liberty is rarely accorded, mingle with the throng, and may be seen inspecting the display of beads and bangles as devoutly as if no other object of worship invited their regard; while half-tipsy priests decked with garlands are hoisting the idol to his throne on an immense turreted car, or, having accomplished that feat, together with the work of robing the image and other preliminaries of the ceremonial, lead off the procession with maniacal gestures and howls.

The constructive ingenuity of France in matters puerile has provided for the amusement of her young people toy-houses, in the open apartments of which doll ladies and gentlemen appear seated or standing in the various attitudes peculiar to polite society. These figures are movable, in order that by arrangement and transposition an interchange of visits may be effected among them. Now this is very much the principle on which some Hindoo festivals are contrived. The course of procedure actually comprises this 'playing with dolls' on a large scale,

for the gods are thus made to visit one another. Nor are they all required to make the excursion alone. Juggernaut, for example, enthroned on his lofty vehicle at Serampore, is associated with his brother Balurama and his sister Subhudra, seated one on either side; and so, horses being harnessed and riders in their places, the people rush forward to grasp the ropes, and the worshipful trio proceed on their journey with a heavy rumbling noise. A deity is brought forth from his shrine to greet them by the way, and after some further ceremonial they are borne to the temple of the god Radha-büllübh, with whom they abide eight days, on the expiry of which Juggernaut returns to his shrine with the like grandeur and dignity of escort.

That thousands of men and women everywhere throughout the country regard this rude child's-play with an earnest and reverential eye there is no room to doubt, inexplicable as the circumstance may appear. It is, however, satisfactory to observe, that a large portion of the multitudes who now attend such scenes evidently regard them as mere holiday occasions enlivened with a routine of pageantry.

Our dwelling-place in Calcutta was on a house-top—that is to say, we resided in the spacious upper floor of a large warehouse, whence it was pleasant to emerge on the breezy picturesque elevation of the level balustraded roof. Not during the heat of the day, but late in the afternoon, or more especially at the still, sombre hour of cockcrow, while the mists of night were rising like a slowly lifted pall from the river and its far-winding range of masts; while kites and crows, perched on the rigging of ships and other airy heights, awaking, we may suppose, from dreams of some hideous death banquet, flapped the dew and the stiffness

from their wings preparatory to swooping down in search of the ghastly reality; and while looking below and around at the wide stretch and multiform aspect of Calcutta, we could say with Philip van Artevelde from his watch-tower in Ghent :—

‘ Here lies a sleeping city ; God of dreams,
What an unreal and fantastic world
Is going on below ! ’



TEMPLES ON THE HOOGLY.

Although, however, thus raised above the ordinary sphere of human life, we did not lack other company, for the ubiquitous crows came in flocks to share with us a situation which was not only congenial to their habits, but rendered exceptionally attractive by reason of the crumbs with which we were wont to regale them.

The friend with whom we resided here, in what he called 'bachelor's quarters' was then undergoing that life of penance to which I have alluded as being frequently entailed on men prosecuting business in India. A year or two before he had taken his wife and young family to England, the lady having succumbed to the effects of the climate, himself returning alone to take his turn at the wheel. He possessed a handsome villa at Tittighur, on the banks of the river, about twenty miles beyond Calcutta, and together with other gentlemen similarly situated was wont to repair thither at the week's end, driving in a 'buggy,' by the spacious Barrackpore Road, bordered by fine trees, with fields and farms on either hand, or floating in a '*boghlio*' with the tide-stream past the varied panorama of the river—by ghauts, mosques, and temples, scenes of living industry, the smoke of death-fires, and the hideous feast of large birds sailing along with fragments of the dead which had escaped the consuming element and been committed to the stream.

Such are my own experiences of the journey to Tittighur, itself a beautiful spot, and all the more attractive as a place of residence for being situated within two miles of that celebrated military station, Barrackpore, whose fine park, surrounded by handsome residences, is also enriched by a fair collection of Indian zoological specimens. But already both road and river, with whatever fascinations they really possessed, have been forsaken for the all-absorbing rail, and the Eastern Bengal line enables the Calcutta merchant to accomplish in thirty minutes the distance which constituted but yesterday a drive or sail of hours.

On arriving, however, we remained a few days at one of the hotels, the better to enjoy the society of some friends with whom

we had become acquainted by the way, and who, after a short rest there, intended pursuing their way to a far northern station.

There would have been no reason to notice this little *détour* from our ordinary course, so tame and slow was the routine of the hotel with its phlegmatic service and unsavoury cuisine, but for the very sparkling incident that signalised our depar-



GHAUT NEAR BARRACKPORE.

ture. This had been just effected, after much worry and trouble (our baggage piled on the top of a crazy vehicle partly held together with ropes), and we had rumbled away perhaps a hundred yards from the door, when the driver came to a stop, and engaged in leisurely conversation with one of the hotel servants, who had evidently run after him on some urgent errand.

Having managed with difficulty to get my head out of the window, what was my indignation and surprise to find this fellow holding the horse by the bridle, and explaining with infinite *sang froid* that he had been sent to demand payment of the hotel bill! In vain I shouted that he was the messenger of a set of blundering boobies; in vain I commanded the driver to



BARRACKPORE PARK.

go on; and presently we found a little crowd collecting around us, eager no doubt to see the *sahib* and the *mem sahib* who had been caught running away without defraying the reckoning. Zounds! here was a bombshell cast into the camp; a rough check to our hitherto smooth progress. To think of a man who had travelled so far over a course strewn with the flowers of welcome, and who had thus been induced to anticipate a

distinguished reception in Calcutta, actually arrested in the public street, seated with his poor wife in a dilapidated gharry, and accused of decamping without paying his lodgings! *Donner und blitzen*! such an insult would shake the temper of a saint, and was therefore too much for mine. Of course I knew my own innocence of the abominable charge, but what trouble might it not cause me, and what would Mrs. Grundy say? Oh, for a supple cane and the shoulders of the sleepy-eyed half-caste whose receipt for the bill was happily safe in my pocket, but who had himself forgotten all about the settlement, if indeed he had roused himself to think at all! Such was the amiable sentiment, stimulated by which I was in the act of scrambling out of the gharry with the intention of rushing back to the hotel, when a second leisurely messenger appeared, quietly telling the first that it was 'all right.' The sleepy eyes had opened in due time to a sense of their blindness; and our meek driver, glad no doubt to be released from custody, immediately bore us away from the scene of our humiliation.

It may serve to throw some light on this episode when I explain that Calcutta, at once a large shipping port and a necessary way of approach to the populous North-Western districts, is, or it may now be more correct to say *was*, a great rendezvous of adventurers, who, when they did run away in ante-railway days, were virtually beyond pursuit, seeing that their hiding-place, 'the Mofussil,' signified an area of many thousands of miles. Such a country, however, really possesses no attractions for needy rambles. On the contrary, Iago's advice to the Venetian simpleton, 'put money in thy purse,' may be addressed to all comers.

In reviewing the soldier's or the civilian's pay, the salary of European assistants, or the profits of trade in India, let us remember what has been already stated, that living is doubly expensive there. Single men, or those who being married are for the time unblest with that much-prized possession misnamed an 'incumbrance,' may reside at one of the many board-



THE HOUSEHOLD STAFF.

ing-houses in Calcutta comfortably enough ; but such has been the great advance in the value of property, that about 600*l.* a year is now only an ordinary rent for a respectable family house.

The hire of native bone and muscle has not risen, it is true, proportionately with the value of brick and mortar, and the pay of domestic servants ranges only from four to ten rupees per

month; still, so numerous are these native servitors that they constitute an establishment of themselves. Another item of expense belongs to the maintenance of carriage and horses as the prevailing and only feasible means of locomotion for Europeans during the heat of the day.

Were this all, the emoluments of our Indian commercial and administrative systems might be sufficient for the end they are supposed to subserve—which, no doubt, they are to the more prudent order of recipients—but, alas! the tyranny of fashion, and the love of social distinction, prey like a blight on Anglo-Indian life, and rob too many of our countrymen of the reward for which they toil. In Calcutta more especially the dearly-earned incomes of European residents are spent with a freedom which furnishes a striking comment on the desire so universally felt, and so frequently expressed, to save money and go home.

The 'course' occupies a portion of the splendid *Maidan*, or public park, to which I have alluded elsewhere, and encloses a labyrinth of luxuriant walks, called Eden Gardens. Every afternoon, a little before sunset, the native and European gentry of Calcutta meet here on horseback or in carriages, to air their dignity and survey each other according to Indian custom. That strange gathering of the lieges, in circulating motion, altogether eclipses, in sparkle and variety, such displays as those of Hyde Park, or the Champs Elysées. The preponderance of military decorations on the one side and of native tinsel on the other convert the meeting into a gilded spectacle. Here, radiant with gold-brodered skull-cap, silken pantaloons, dashing *cummerbund*, and woof of chains, appear Bengal fashionables astride well-trained chargers, or lolling in elegant equipages. Many

handsome vehicles with attendants in a variety of liveries, perambulate the course, bearing English groups of

‘City ladies, pale and splendid,
By moustachioed youths attended ;’

or wealthy Mahometan and Hindoo families, arrayed in silk and velvet, far transcending in fashionable exterior our nearer kinsmen the Eurasians, who go the round seated in their humbler buggies, or packed in family parties within the cover of a one-horse *gharry*. As with similar meetings elsewhere in India there is little or no association of the races in this public convention of the citizens. On several occasions we were pointed out an ex-Minister, or quondam native ruler, grandly reclining in his barouche, and in whom it was evident that defeat and misfortune had not extinguished the pride of state. Among such notabilities were the Sikh sirdars, seated in a carriage drawn by four splendid horses, and gracefully attired in white and pink dresses of fine muslin, their broad intelligent faces adorned with trim, black beards and whiskers.

Thus in itself the Maidan assembly presented an animated scene, and the play of happy children round the band-stand formed a bright dash in the Anglo-Indian picture ; but, otherwise, I imagined (although I hope to be pardoned for any mistake in this respect) it was devoid of cheerfulness. In the waning light, a crowd of people paraded the walks with ‘measured step and slow,’ discoursing in subdued tones, above which might be heard the occasional ring of a scabbard on the sword as it clanked at the heels of some military promenader. In due time the scene suddenly closed, for the sun had dipped into the forest that fringed the western sky, and

the ruby glow fast spreading along the line of the horizon was the signal of approaching night. The riders and pedestrians dispersed, and the occupants of carriages, having lit their lamps, streamed homeward, to wind up another day with the evening dinner—some, no doubt, ruminating as they went on the sweet summer gloamings and social winter joys of another land.

All this time, standing motionless as statues on the top of Government House, or one of the adjoining buildings, several of those large, weird birds called adjutants—Calcutta scavengers, whose ordinary habit it is to stalk serenely among the citizens, grubbing under the protection of the law—might be observed looking down upon the proceedings. Now was heard the short rapid yelp of roving bands of jackals, coming forth to search for prey on the darkening and deserted plain. The business of the day was ended, and the 'City of Palaces,' an hour ago so bright and bustling, became a scene of solitude and gloom.

The organization of Calcutta life, like that of Bombay and Madras, is distinguished by a long and noble list of charitable societies and hospitals, together with institutions educational, ecclesiastical, mechanical, geological, agricultural, or medical, all flourishing under a mixed system of native and European patronage.

The Church of Rome and its branches occupy a strong position. There are churches 'Greek,' 'Armenian,' 'Baptist,' 'Lutheran;' 'native churches,' with native pastors and communicants, and Jewish 'synagogues.' The catalogue also comprises the Parsee 'Temple of Silence' and the Parsee 'Agiaree,' or 'Temple of the Sacred Fire,' in which we are told 'the religious services are performed by five priests.'

Among the learned bodies of the period appears the Mahometan Literary Society, of which Moulvie Mahomed Wujeeh is president, and which is said to comprise among its members 'more than 500 Mahometan gentlemen from all parts of India.' Like Madras, Calcutta is great in masonic societies, among which, however, the native element, so prominent in the case of the former city, seems to have no place.

In Bengal, with Calcutta as the centre of action, the number of schools and colleges receiving aid from government, in 1868, was 3,411, with an attendance of 145,142 male and female scholars; being an increase of 503 schools and 23,662 pupils on the numbers of the former year. Those having no government assistance amounted to 2,196 schools and 65,212 pupils. I have already explained that the several languages of India are taught in these seminaries; but the University, rightly or wrongly, does not recognize any other than the English tongue as the medium of high-class education.

'Shipping' and 'dock' concerns, together with 'coal,' 'printing,' 'irrigation,' 'screwing and press,' 'indigo' and 'tea' companies, constitute the principal items of the commercial list; for Calcutta, although abounding in supplies of jute and cotton, produces manufactures of either only to a small extent. So far as my knowledge goes, scarcely half-a-dozen cotton and jute spinning or weaving-mills exist in the whole of Bengal and North-Western India. These departments of productive industry naturally belong to such a country as our own, and to such places as Manchester, Glasgow, and Dundee. For the reasons formerly given, with reference to the operations of the Bombay mills, the cloth and yarn produced here are of heavy kinds,

EXPORTS FROM CALCUTTA TO GREAT BRITAIN OF BENGAL PRODUCE.

ARTICLES	1849 1850	1859 1860	1860 1861	1861 1862	1862 1863	1863 1864	1864 1865	1865 1866	1866 1867	1867 1868	1868 1869
Sugar	766,135	184,598	251,614	181,804	2,223	115,024	240,174	94,594	17,626	10,693	130,465
Saltpetre	167,879	178,283	130,617	190,852	236,403	210,302	116,956	149,396	159,396	108,868	138,344
Rice	367,660	170,430	628,832	1,113,221	635,487	512,008	144,307	248,584	208,120	1,227,856	501,159
Linseed	35,572	1,658,398	1,438,880	1,145,444	2,259,410	2,550,277	3,042,611	1,807,548	1,084,288	1,813,875	1,648,931
Indigo	18,388	18,016	21,157	13,714	19,610	17,531	17,403	15,393	17,797	15,914	15,689
Raw Silk	8,872	9,293	9,255	4,700	6,353	7,686	8,237	7,774	7,774	7,169	5,132
Corals	3,353	1,372	799	1,008	954	589	582	355	471	366	670
Choppals and Bandanoes	176	128	122	96	188	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jute	138,818	267,876	344,687	365,501	330,691	586,809	582,461	649,191	567,354	667,446	864,485
Hemp . . . . .	...	1,116	1,259	228	1,245	2,205	4,866	9,404	1,477	571	964
Run	2,073	1,074	1,287	420	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Shellac	10,485	7,397	10,704	18,129	17,267	18,231	20,668	22,066	17,635	17,814	20,385
Lac Dye	7,842	2,743	4,359	4,730	4,457	4,895	5,898	4,468	4,095	5,413	5,822
Munjeet . . . . .	...	3,517	2,986	6,224	1,299	2,403	1,543	220	513	479	2,718
Rattan . . . . .	...	2,405	1,752	1,579	385	...	1,238	...	148	...	1,080
Cowries . . . . .	...	6,868	593	109	3,540	...	...	...	2,303	...	3,148
Cutch	30,064	33,058	28,469	22,915	18,558	8,143	2,996	9,743	137	7,563	14,848
Turmeric	12,758	20,327	11,070	7,366	200	9,690	25,432	27,988	24,414	29,382	58,769
Buffalo-horns	177,232	214,518	456,435	291,538	306,061	239,809	246,854	216,077	375,000	114,256	261,352
Tips	5,751	5,519	5,937	7,380	2,777	5,136	4,453	4,339	5,763	4,621	5,818
Ginger	22,595	3,281	103	87	674	14,742	24,754	14,596	11,512	3,259	9,313
Cow-hides	1,273,513	2,076,613	2,661,818	2,868,814	3,570,372	2,753,573	2,406,118	2,452,719	3,044,432	2,659,782	3,551,233
Buffalo-hides	12,402	7,958	21,896	99,282	25,834	19,332	3,661	10,674	4,532	12,159	14,269
Safflower	3,739	2,970	5,147	4,505	2,454	3,148	2,848	3,555	4,324	2,714	3,635
Deer-horns	113,489	50,221	94,265	56,776	38,395	23,078	21,383	17,497	14,411	8,520	16,166
Castor Oil . . . . .	...	34,122	30,858	22,201	48,136	25,307	22,030	24,444	27,683	41,015	55,920
Cotton . . . . .	...	...	7	5,733	125,492	154,418	151,895	210,753	229,740	126,153	150,341
Tea	346,320	1,277,840	1,341,920	1,866,845	2,318,150	3,019,006	3,117,209	4,479,927	7,097,194	5,204,861	10,483,861
Tallow . . . . .	...	12,599	16,997	7,910	1,467	2,191	1,689	1,057	...	...	304
Rape Seed . . . . .	...	440,684	185,492	3,949	339,966	211,138	276,684	1,166,749	1,896,057	835,664	90,036

and for local consumption alone. The few jute mills (which are chiefly situated in the neighbourhood of Calcutta) are engaged in the manufacture of gunny cloth and bags, intended for the double purpose of baling produce in India and of export to America and Ceylon. The annexed table, with which I have been favoured by a long established and extensive Indian firm, will afford any one unacquainted with the subject precise information regarding the nature and progress of the normal trade of the country, as represented by the Calcutta exports. It will be observed that the columns comprise a period of twenty years, the last ten, beginning with 1859, being given consecutively.

As regards the locations of the more important products in so vast an area of growth, it may be explained, on the authority of the Bengal Directory for last year, that there are 126 indigo 'concerns' (some of them with a large number of 'factories') scattered throughout Allahabad, Allyghur, Azimghur, Bancooral, Beerbhoom, Benares, Bhaugulpore, Bustee, Burdwan, Chumparun, Chuprah, Etah, Furreedpore, Futteeghur, Ghazeepore, Goruckpore, Jessore, Jounpore, Malda, Midnapore, Mirzapore, Monghyr, Moorshedabad, Mymensing, Nuddea, Purneah, Rajhahye, Sarun, Shahabad, and Tirhoot; one jute concern in Mymensing having three factories; three silk 'plantations,' comprising fifteen 'gardens,' located in Beerbhoom, Furreedpore, Jessore, Midnapore, Rajhahye, and numerous tea 'plantations' situated in Assam, Cachar, Chittagong, and Darjeeling.

From these columns (which, with the exception of sugar cultivation, scarcely exhibit a retrograde movement) we miss, of course, the two great items of productive labour, opium and salt, which Government reserves to itself, and which also demand a passing word of reference.

A tax on *salt* seems at first sight a hardship for the people, but such a revenue as 5,000,000*l.* affords material aid to the Administration in its plans for promoting the public welfare. The quantity of this great necessary of life is fortunately abundant throughout the land; but important preparations are being made, especially in Northern India, by means of rail and water ways, to render the sources of supply more accessible. In that region the Sambhur Lake alone, from which a large portion of the consumption is derived, would (as was recently stated by the Honourable Mr. Strachey in the Viceregal Legislative Council of Calcutta), if properly utilized, yield a sufficient supply to serve the country for 500 years. For the collection of the duty, the Government maintains an inland customs line more than 2,000 miles long, and 16,000 men at a cost exceeding 200,000*l.* per annum.

The *opium trade* continues to yield a large and increasing revenue. If it be true, as is sometimes alleged, both in and out of parliament, that we acquire from this traffic the wages of sin, it appears that iniquity has high rewards, the emoluments here amounting to nearly 9,000,000*l.* sterling per annum, and thus forming a temptation which it may at least be said, on behalf of the State, only extraordinary virtue could resist. But, indeed, the opium trade, as an ethical question, is somewhat difficult and involved. In itself, the drug is a rare gift of Providence—a real blessing and proper source of comfort to mankind. That we supply China every year with an enormous quantity of opium, for which we receive an immense sum of money, and that people there are in the habit of converting what in its proper use is a boon into a curse by excessive indulgence, are facts

which do not invalidate the foregoing statement. Those who denounce the traffic, however, will be glad to learn that our hands may soon be found comparatively clean, without any effort of our own being employed to render them so; for we now hear from China of an extensive growth and increasing cultivation of the poppy, notwithstanding the stringent prohibition against its plantation, which had been issued by the Chinese authorities. If a proper subject of regret, it is also a serious consideration for us in another sense, that the Canton opium shopkeepers are, according to the intelligence of the day, supplied to some extent with the indigenous drug, which is rapidly improving in quality, and is now taken by the native consumers mixed in stated proportions with the product of Hindostan. While fully recognizing the evil effects arising from the excessive consumption of opium, it behoves the social economist to consider that any violent intermeddling with a trade of such magnitude would not only seriously diminish the Indian revenue, but affect the whole commerce of the East, and even overturn the existing arrangements of Government.

From a statement submitted in the 'Report on the Administration of the Bengal Presidency' for 1868, we find that the number of chests sold reached 47,999, and that the proceeds realized amounted to 6,39,27,309 rupees, showing a net revenue, after deducting charges, of 4,67,37,033 rupees, this being the 'highest amount ever realized for the cultivation of opium in Bengal.' So much for the trade in this famous drug, and the prospects of opium-eaters throughout the world. It is a well-known fact that many of the natives of India are, like the Chinese themselves, very fond of the narcotic, and only prevented by motives of necessary economy from using it more freely.

The *indigo plant*, which is indigenous to the soil, has an ancient and interesting history, indigo being mentioned as an article of export from India to Rome during the reign of Augustus. We owe our knowledge of its manufacture to the Hindoos, and as the operation is purely a chemical one, including the process of fermentation in vats, it is believed that agricultural science now at work throughout the country will yet effect great improvements in the mode of its production.

To *jute*, which must also undergo a kind of fermenting process before the fibre can be released, the last observation also applies. But the trade in jute, unlike that in indigo, is a recent one, of very rapid growth; and the former article stands in the anomalous position of being very little adapted to the circumstances of life on the soil which bears it in such abundance, while it serves an excellent purpose in colder climates, supplying, as everyone knows, our northern dwellings with sundry familiar aids to family comfort.

As regards the now all-important question of *cotton-growing*, it is, I believe, a mistake to suppose that the production is retarded by any prejudice, religious or otherwise, on the part of the native cultivator, against the new *modus operandi*. That he should have been slow to appreciate the value of agricultural implements and machinery, of which he had no experience, will be scarcely a matter of surprise to those acquainted with the Indian idiosyncrasy. But, according to popular opinion in the country, a desire to produce the crop which he finds will pay him best, is a stronger feeling with the ryot than any partiality he may retain for the ancient system of culture. The prospect certainly points to a gradual extension of the area now occupied

by this great staple, as irrigation and railways progress, and the agriculturist becomes familiar with the improved modes of husbandry. When the American war laid open the world's market to India, the then existing means and appliances could not fulfil the desired purpose of a much enlarged and more economical production. The requirements of skill, experience, machinery, and means of transit, all needed from the first, are now about to combine their powers, as they have not hitherto done, but even yet their united action in any effectual form is a consummation, which can only be reached through the lapse of years.

We learn that the latest Official Report on the condition of those extensive cotton districts, the Central Provinces and the Berars, is highly encouraging. Native cultivators begin to understand how to select the seed best adapted to the soil and climate of different districts, and in this way, more than by the introduction of exotic varieties, are succeeding in improving the quality of the growth. They have also adopted improved presses for turning out bales more convenient for transit, and it remains for the public enterprize to go on making roads, bridging *nullahs*, and opening up the way towards rail and river. The vast extent of the field open for cultivation will be found indicated on the map. Till within the last few years, as will afterwards more particularly appear, the greater portion of the cotton grown in these districts was conveyed by means of pack oxen moving at a snail's pace to Mirzapore on the Ganges—a distance perhaps of 500 miles, through byways, bridle-roads, and jungle-paths, obstructed by thorns and briars, which rent the bags and wasted their contents. Thence the cotton was

taken chiefly in boats to Calcutta, a stretch of 721 miles by the shortest passage, or 898 miles by that of the Sunderbunds. The greater portion now finds its way to Bombay, but it is still dragged over the country by oxen to the nearest railway station.

Meanwhile, the mercantile world has discovered that the reciprocal interests of our own country and its great dependency render this subject one of paramount interest and anxiety. The course of events will necessarily, in some measure, depend on the future circumstances attending the competition with America. While that country has been engaged in resuscitating, as best it might, the scattered elements of its former industry, the indigenous staple of Indian cotton has undergone an immense improvement. Cotton 'screwing' and 'press' companies have sprung up in the proper localities, and Indian growers have entered upon new land tenures, of a nature calculated to afford a fresh stimulus to their exertions. At present the exports of both countries to Great Britain are nearly equal, and the commercial community will trace with interest every step in the great race of competition which may now be held as begun. Not that the successful progression of either of these important movements implies the decline of the other. On the contrary, there is every reason to conclude that the world has room enough for the products of both countries, and that it would be well to go on stimulating the growth of Indian cotton, without fear of America monopolizing the demand. The circumstances, actual as well as relative, are changed since the outbreak of the American war. There is now a larger outlet of consumption, and we are surrounded by the evidences of a short supply for the increased and increasing wants of the day. America, as a

country with a rapidly growing population, will probably have greatly enlarged requirements of her own. India, whose future welfare is deeply concerned in this question, has already, as I have indicated, improved much, both as regards extent and quality of production, and will no doubt continue to advance with the labour and experience of each succeeding year.

But we are here arrested by a new and rich mine in the agricultural wealth of the country. It is not many years since the *tea* company mania first set in, at which time there were few gardens and a comparatively trifling production. Although the eastern tea districts were, as they still are, isolated from other parts of Bengal, and without a single road of approach, skilled labour was imported from China, and gangs of coolies, under the protection of Government, were sent up from Calcutta to Cachar, Sylhet, and Assam. Leaseholds, at first nearly worthless, continued to rise in value, and for a while all went prosperously. In due time, however, the magnificent prospects of tea cultivation collapsed, their overthrow entailing wide-spread disappointment and loss. The spirit of speculation had, as usual, run too fast, and outstripped the natural progress of events. During the height of the competition, jungle land was purchased at enormous prices, and entrusted to incompetent management, thus doubly complicating the catastrophe. Nor are the difficulties in which many plantations were involved yet at an end. While I write, the Calcutta press is busy with this topic, promulgating much valuable information and good advice, for the benefit of unfortunate planters. The truth seems to be, however, that the elements of confusion are gradually subsiding into order. Few of those joint-

stock companies now remain, whose aim it was to enrich their promoters without regard to ulterior results, and working estates are in charge either of their owners or properly selected agents. During the last four years, the yield has increased threefold. The field open for cultivation is large enough to supply the world, and considering the great improvements going on, alike in the mode of manufacture and the economy of management, we may hope to see the production gradually expand, thus affording another solid and extensive sphere of employment for the people.

The Government report for last year shows that the extent of land *under cultivation* in the different districts amounted in the aggregate to between 80,000 and 90,000 acres. Further details could only be rendered complete in the case of Assam, which will, however, serve the purpose of a general illustration, when it is explained that the 43,556 acres under cultivation there include 480 gardens, which give employment to 171 Europeans and 962 native 'assistants,' together with 22,600 imported and 11,633 local labourers. The entire quantity of tea exported from Calcutta in 1867-8 was 8,789,344 lbs., being an increase of fully 1,500,000 lbs. on that of the preceding year.

It is so far unsatisfactory that tea is not an Indian luxury, and that the poor Assamese and Cacharies, to whose door it has thus been brought, regard the decoction somewhat in the light of a not very disagreeable medicine, preferring to waste their slender surplus means on the intoxicating delights of opium. Success, however, may gradually attend the efforts now being made to introduce tea to native consumption. Lovers of the

beverage in English households are aware that Indian tea is rich and strong compared with that of China, a mixture of both being generally prized. The quantity imported into Great Britain last year (7,320,000 lbs.) exhibits an average increase for the last three years of more than 1,000,000 lbs. per annum, so that the article is gradually becoming better known among us. In quitting this subject I need scarcely point out how well worth the attention of our home government is the development of this new branch of our eastern industry. A duty of 6*d.* per lb. is levied on all tea imported into this country. The cultivation of that plant, therefore, on the hill tracts of Assam and Cachar, not only implies a means of employment, and a source of wealth in India itself, but a large and increasing amount of revenue to the imperial treasury.

Indian *coffee* does not appear in the Bengal list of exports, the great *locale* of its growth being Southern India, between Comorin and Mysore. It will be seen from the map, that this district is, like Ceylon itself, exposed to the influence of both the north-east and south-west monsoons, being thus favourably situated for the cultivation of the coffee plant, which requires much moisture. Attempts recently made by firms in Bombay to form plantations as far north as Goa, are meeting with a fair measure of success. But, like tea cultivation in India, that of coffee is marked by an interesting history and favourable prospects. Two centuries, indeed, have elapsed since a Mahomedan pilgrim planted some coffee-berries on the Babaooden hills; yet cultivation made slow progress until about a dozen years ago, when a number of Ceylon planters, scared from that

island by the exorbitant value of land, emigrated to Madras, and gave an impetus to the movement which has already transformed large tracts of forest and jungle into thriving plantations along the slopes of the Western Ghauts. India now ranks as fourth among coffee-producing countries. The whole exports last year exceeded 1,000,000*l.* sterling in value, being far ahead of the previous annual amount, and nearly equal to one-half the shipments of Ceylon.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

RAILWAY GLIMPSES.

Sampson. Gregory, o' my word, we'll not carry coals.

Gregory. No; for then we should be colliers.—*Romeo and Juliet.*



HERE is no subject more charming than the romance of history, no place more attractive than the scene of its events. The chronicle of perished empires may be regarded as man's enduring storybook, when that of childhood has ceased to interest. It is wanting, no doubt, in the greater characters who were wont to excite our admiration and awe—the Giants and Demons, Genii and Fairies, working miracles and magic to the utter subversion of reason and the material laws. These legendary creations so fascinating to the youthful mind soon pass away from the sphere of life, leaving no witness behind them. Nevertheless, such a tale as that of the Moguls, illustrated by the records of their grandeur—stupendous castles, gorgeous halls, and jewelled thrones—almost awakens a spark of the old enthusiasm. Who indeed could stand at the gateway of the North-West without feeling desirous to advance in order to explore the richest archives of India and the gilded sepulchres of her kings?

It was naturally, then, with a pleasant feeling of anticipation that we took our way 'up-country.' We started from the Howrah terminus of the East Indian Railway, then open to Ranee-gunge, a distance of 120 miles; and it may be premised that the characteristic features, according to the example here furnished, of a 'railway station' in India, would afford Mr. Frith, who has immortalized the subject in England, a fresh and lively theme for his pencil. The native mind does not take matters easy while travelling, and the presence of a leisurely person on the platform is quite a phenomenon. The place is therefore a Babel of sound and confusion, in which the varied tones of manhood mingle with the shrill call of women and children, more or less lost to one another in the crowd. Dark eyes flash, dishevelled turbans stream, and white togas flow, in the impatient rush for places, as if such hot haste afforded the only chance of securing them, while the staff of railway porters, called *chokyders* or police, stylishly attired at Howrah in black cloth edged with yellow (exchanged for a white cotton dress in the hot season), red turban, and leathern belt adorned with a large brass buckle, glide among the throng directing the more bewildered passengers, or swelling the tumult by rapping with official canes the knuckles of the unmanageable and refractory.

Exclusive men of caste complicate the *mêlée* in their eager, but generally vain, search for a carriage where they may chiefly, if not altogether, consort with their peculiar order; and the confusion is further enhanced by the presence of such articles as cooking-pans, clothes, and bedding, which the owner desires to carry about with him, and beseeches for permission to introduce

into the crowded carriage. The passenger urges his suit, the *chokeydar* shouts his refusal, while the picturesque bone of contention is alternately seized and recaptured by either disputant.

Anon ensues a fresh bustle of official preparation, and a clearing of the way, enlivened by an occasional sharp cry, as the *jemmidar's* (foreman's) cane is applied to the poor spindle-shanks of some idle coolie who happens to block the passage. The signal for this movement may be the arrival of a great English *sahib*, or native nobleman, with attendant suite and profuse display of railway comforts; or some 'light of the harem' closely encased in a palanquin, which the bearers fairly thrust into the compartment ere the lady emerges, the better to conceal her charms from the prying gaze of man.

Strange in itself, and fraught with important results, is the fact that the Indian public have elected to travel almost exclusively in third class carriages; first and even second class passengers constituting a mere fraction of the whole number, as the official details to be afterwards quoted will show.

The first class representative of so distinguished a minority reclines comfortably in a cushioned compartment, provided with a double roofing and Venetian blinds to shield him at once from the heat and the glare of the day. But no padded interiors or shaded windows await the eager crowd of ticket-holders, who are simply provided with standing room in covered waggons half open at the sides, into which they are content to flock like sheep into a pen. Content too, not in all cases from necessity, for such is the force of Indian frugality that it prompts the aspiring baboo and the high caste dignitary to huddle thus together with their poorer fellows, the attractions of cheap

travelling being paramount and irresistible. What a contrast to the exclusive habits of ante-railway days is afforded by this spectacle!

As regards the visible staff of Indian railways it is of course mainly composed of native officials, the European element being generally represented only by the guard, engine-driver, and station-master. The cost of traffic is as yet somewhat higher for goods than the average European rate; but the passenger fares although greater in the first class, are lower in the third than those of the West. Meanwhile, it is satisfactory to know from the public returns that, in giving a guarantee for these splendid schemes, the Government had rightly calculated on their prospective success.

Before starting we were glad to observe that a few other white faces besides our own mingled with the calico-clad crowd around us, and specially welcome were those of our friends and fellow-travellers, a Rev. Doctor and his wife, to whom we had had the good fortune of being introduced in Calcutta. They were bound to their home in the far North, and what between their knowledge (through former experience) of the way, and their truly delightful society, were indeed serviceable friends to us, smoothing all the asperities of the journey until we bade them farewell in Delhi. Although the country through which we passed between Calcutta and Raneegunge possessed no such favourite attractions as 'mountain, cataract, and glen,' yet, as strangers, we found in the total absence of these the negative advantage of a change, while, on a soft couch under a pleasant awning, we enjoyed the novel luxury of sweeping at railway speed through the sunny plains of Bengal. The route was diversified

with picturesque glimpses of dense little woods and forests on either side of the way, peopled with rustic figures almost entirely luxuriating in beauty unadorned, and apparently in thorough enjoyment of the *dolce far niente*; brick works were in operation



BENGAL RUSTIC SCENE.

at intervals among the rank foliage; and tiny dwellings, constructed of earth or reed-work, nestled beneath the shade of palm and banyan trees, with ebony children whom scarf, *saree*, or other habiliment had never yet encircled, staring or gambolling in the

foreground. Here, and during our further progress northward we had peeps of villages where life seemed to stagnate through excess of heat, and in which the Mussulman was visible at prayer in his mosque, or the Hindoo in his temple. Bordering the line tanks great and small came successively into view, wherein, according to custom, men, women, and children were assembled, holding a Bengal conversazione in refreshing conclave; or, net in hand, engaged together with an equally assiduous throng of ducks and geese in grubbing for something of which the natural element was mud. The rice-fields, to which the lines of irrigation crossing each other gave the appearance of a colossal chessboard, had recently been shorn of their crops, and were only diversified here and there by farmhouses shrouded in clumps of trees, and stark human forms far out in the sunshine, bending over the renewed work of cultivation. The wide level plains, apparently devoid of knoll or mound, stretched away until they melted into the horizon; their only verdure, the dense-leaved trees by which they were studded; their only life, the herds of cattle visible at intervals around.

A run of about five hours brought us to Raneegunge, a place having a more English aspect than the scenes of wood and jungle we had just traversed. Here was a more open country, a harder soil, and the familiar spectacle of coal mounds and colliery shafts, intermingled with trim white chimney stacks emitting clouds of smoke in the glowing atmosphere.

This is, I believe, the largest of the twenty-seven known coal fields of India, which are chiefly situated in the districts between Calcutta and Bombay. It is described in the recent 'Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India,' as covering an area of about

500 square miles, and containing an available supply of more than 14,000,000,000 tons.

According to a statement in the 'Calcutta Englishman,' the total production of Raneegunge in 1868 amounted to 1,34,50,829 *maunds*—a quantity which, taking the *maund* at 80 lbs. 2 oz., amounts to 493,608 tons. The out-turn of the five principal mining concerns was estimated at 1,19,21,065 *maunds* (about 437,061 tons), that of the Bengal Coal Company, which is said to employ 3,000 hands, alone amounting to 61,39,105 *maunds* or 225,077 tons. Next to the Bengal Company in order of extent come the Sirsole mines belonging to an enterprising Bengalee.

It is to be remarked, however, that although extensive coal fields thus exist in British India, the quality is much inferior to that of our home supply, yielding, as I have been told, more than five times the quantity of ash, and a deficiency of carbon or heat-giving power to the extent of about one-third.

Till recently some difficulty was experienced in procuring a sufficient supply of labour for the deeper mines, the Hindoos having, naturally enough, had a strong objection to descend into the bowels of the earth; but these scruples were gradually overcome, as the people became familiar with the situation.

With very few exceptions the construction and routine of Indian coal mines are still of a rude primitive order. Many of them are entered by means of steps cut in the solid rock, and thence by ladders to the mine galleries. Below ground the hewn coal is carried to the bottom of the shaft, chiefly by women and children in baskets sustained on the head. It is then raised to the surface through the instrumentality of a 'gin' or windlass, which is worked by from thirty to thirty-six women.

Nevertheless, it appears that the number of steam engines at work among the Raneegunge coal fields had increased from twenty-eight with 490 horse-power in 1860, to sixty-one, aggregating 867 horse-power, in 1868.

The railway has for the present entirely superseded the original method of forwarding coals to Calcutta, the great sphere of consumption; and although the rate of carriage is dear, namely, four and a half rupees per ton, or nearly a penny per mile, this change is by no means surprising in view of the former system of conveyance in boats by a long winding course, first down the river Damoodah, and thence by the Hooghly to the place of destination. The great obstacle presented by the Damoodah itself, which is not always in a navigable condition, was aggravated by the dilatory habits of the *dhandies*, or rowers. In this, as in other departments of labour in Bengal, the baneful system of money advances prevailed, and the *dhandies* were frequently in no hurry to complete their voyage, so tedious at the best, preferring to idle over, and sometimes entirely to shirk a task, for which little or no remuneration remained to be claimed. Then hope deferred sickened the heart and soured the temper of disappointed employers in the capital, and it became necessary to scour the hot banks of the Damoodah in search of the recalcitrant bargers. A long-expected crew might be found to have abandoned their craft in some solitary creek of the river after carousing with their friends for weeks together in the villages by the way. Such was one of the 'troubles' incidental to the Bengal coal trade. Not less vexatious to those concerned were the freaks of the colliers proper of Raneegunge, who, when such was their pleasure,

simply declined to work by the very effectual plan of absenting themselves. For the furtherance of their views, no complicated machinery, such as strikes or trades' unions, was requisite. The fund on which each man fell back in any access of idleness, was the supply of rice in the cupboard; and, if that was enough to admit of a few days' vacation, he felt himself sufficiently independent to go into hiding, leaving the *chokydar*, who would inevitably be despatched for the purpose of ferreting him out, to succeed according to his diligence and ability. This Indian game of hide and seek was or, I may say still, *is* by no means confined to the area of the coal fields, but extends to other spheres of labour. A salutary change, however, which all the *chokydars* in the land could not accomplish, is being gradually brought about by British capital and industry; still if it be true, as some aver, that colliers, even in civilized Europe, are a somewhat troublesome order of 'blacks,' it need scarcely excite our surprise, if the remark should yet apply in a measure to the fast-coloured fraternity of Raneegunge.

Not, however, that the railway ought to or will have the traffic of such districts to itself, for we now learn that the Indian Government has given its sanction to the immediate formation of a canal leading from the Damoodah river at Raneegunge to a point on the Hooghly just below Calcutta. Such a mode of conveyance, by reason of its greater economy, will undoubtedly again divert not only the coal of Raneegunge but much cereal produce to the boat, although of the fugitive *dhandies* it may safely be predicated that their race is run.

To wind up these 'railway glimpses,' one terrible glance remains. In the roasting months of June and July, when the

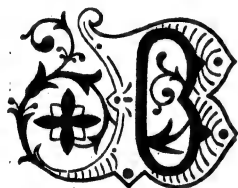
noonday heat in carriages rolling between Cawnpore and Calcutta, packed with a dense crowd, sometimes approaches 120 degrees Fahrenheit, there are passengers who become faint and prostrate in the course of the run. On these occasions the guard in going his rounds rouses dormant figures, in order to ascertain if they are possessed of consciousness; and European travellers, as I have also heard from their own lips, have been fain to call the *bheestie* engaged in watering the platform of any station by the way, and, presenting their steaming heads, beseech him for a gush of water from his *mussack*!



CHAPTER XXIX.

A ROLLING COUCH.

A heap of strange materials packed up with wonderful art.—ADDISON.



UT now the two *dâk* gharries (that of the Rev. Doctor and my own), in which we were to pursue our journey, awaited us at Raneegunge. Their appearance was altogether at variance with ordinary notions of a family travelling conveyance, resembling, more than any thing else, a country tradesman's van. A single glance, indeed, at these twin omens of evil, served to foreshadow the troubles on which we were about to enter, and animated with that conviction my friend and I contemplated, with rueful countenances, the disposal of our baggage, each man's on his own housetop. For, alas ! the gharry, in its exquisite discomfort, had to serve the dual purpose of domicile and carriage. The little well or hollow within, which renders the sitting posture possible, being overlaid by a board at night, and the whole space thus made level covered with a quilt purchased for the purpose in the Calcutta bazaar, the vehicle is transformed into an enclosed travelling couch, in which several members of a family, ingeniously dove-tailed

into one another, contrive to find accommodation, and endeavour to seek repose. The other furniture consists of a projecting board or ledge over the occupant's feet, which fulfils the several offices of table, cupboard, wardrobe, and in that triple capacity sustains the usual variety of necessary domestic articles, food, cutlery, books, bottles, and clothing, all of course mingled together 'in most admired disorder.' On either side is a sliding door and window by which it is possible to obtain a regulated amount of ventilation, *i.e.* so much hot air and dust by day, and so much cold air and dust by night. The straining and rolling of this wheeled abode, together with the jingling and rasping of its numerous bolts and hinges, are things beyond the influence of time and temperature, never flagging for an instant while motion lasts.

So much for the interior of the gharry. Without are a coachman (*gorriwallah*) and his *syce* or groom (the heads of both swathed in cotton cloth as a protection from the sun), together with a living skeleton of a horse always small in size and generally perverse in disposition. The extraordinary prevalence of this latter peculiarity is difficult to understand on any other supposition than that of a not unnatural determination on the part of the animal to repay the driver's cruelty with every means of annoyance at its command; and as the cruelty on the one part is really great, and the perversity on the other undeniably strong, the fact itself may serve to 'point a moral,' though the particulars are not fitted to 'adorn a tale.' I would therefore remark on this subject, that the public service, even in India, might be conducted by worthier means than that of buying up old 'screws' by the score and committing them to the hands of

savages, to the end that the residue of their failing strength may be beaten out with rods of iron. Moderate as the stages are (about seven or eight miles), the exertion demanded of these wretched beasts is frightful. The object in view is simply to accomplish the distance with the greatest possible speed; so that the animal always reaches his destination covered with foam, and generally trembling and tottering in every limb. At each of the numerous halts he is apt to become a source of delay, the 'start' of this single quadruped being often as difficult of accomplishment as that of the whole three-year-old competitors for the blue riband of the turf on Epsom Downs. To begin with any application of the lash is worse than useless, and is therefore seldom attempted, for the thong, if administered, would fall on a body that might be dead for any sign of yielding it would exhibit. Coaxing, or simply waiting till the creature chooses to move, is the device of experience to effect a start. This failing, the *syce* and *gorriwallah* each seize a wheel and set the horse's legs into involuntary motion by forcing the gharry forward, a process which he usually seems to acknowledge in a dogged, dilly-dally way, as a reasonable compromise of the case between him and them; but which he sometimes resists determinedly by planting his forelegs in advance, and opposing his strength to theirs. When the men imagine that the victim is fairly in action, they vault nimbly into their place in front (a moment's pause, or the slightest awkwardness, being certain to bring the movement thus initiated to a close), and as the poor rheumatic limbs of the animal warm into life with exercise, he yields at length to the whip, or perhaps to the application of its iron bound handle to his sharp, protruding

bones, and away he goes careering with his heavy load through the thick blinding dust and the bright burning sunshine.

It was just sunset when our two gharries, the established preliminaries being overcome, trundled away from Raneegunge on their long journey — my friend and I, seated outside our respective vehicles, to enjoy the very transient luxury of an Indian twilight. Such at least was our expressed understanding, nor was it possible to question the wisdom of the arrange-



NATIVE ATTENDANT.

ment. But indeed I did not then well see how my excellent associate could possibly avoid the advantageous position it was his privilege to occupy, considering that his good lady and infant child, together with the necessary appendage of an Ayah (and she a fat one), were already packed in the box below. It is customary with travellers by this route thus to enjoy the first blush of morning and the last radiance of the afternoon when the sun is low, since at any other than these short periods there is the risk of encountering either a roasting from the beams of day,

or a drenching from the dews of evening. This sanitary measure, however, should always be preceded by a walk. My own lot, accompanied by only one, and that my best companion, was the most agreeable which is possible in the circumstances. As soon as the sudden night fell, together with its sure concomitant, the heavy dew, or when the early sun had attained an uncomfortable altitude, my place and a welcome less variable than the day awaited me within.

Among the other 'effects' piled on the top of the gharry was our native servant, Gophall, presenting in that elevated position, with his solemn black eyes, massive red turban, and bright-coloured robes, a most imposing and conspicuous figure. There he was, perched aloft by day and night, as silent and undemonstrative as the japanned tin case and pair of leather portmanteaux with which he was associated; and the fact that he survived all the vicissitudes of that journey through heat and cold was due, I imagine, to good protective preparations on his part, and a frame thoroughly inured to the atmospheric transitions of the country. Gophall, whom we were fortunate in securing at Bombay, through the recommendation of friends there, was a Hindoo, and a superior example of his class. He was willing to minister to all our necessities, but on terms distinctly specified by himself. We had thus an early insight, which experience fully confirmed, into the stereotyped habits and resolute character of the man who accompanied us throughout our Indian tour, and thereafter to China. He was, indeed, quite a model of servitorship; highly trained, handy, respectful, prompt; speaking English well, but naturally silent, and never manifesting a desire to court familiarity.

CHAPTER XXX.

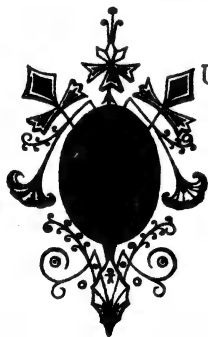
INCIDENTS OF HILL AND PLAIN.

To me

High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture.—CHILDE HAROLD.

Forewarned—forearmed.—*Proverb.*

Methought what pain it was to drown,
What dreadful noise of waters in mine ears.—*King Richard III.*



OUR first stage was Doomree, a distance of nearly eighty miles, which I may mention, by way of example, was accomplished in about eleven hours, ninety miles a day being considered a fair rate of *dâk* travelling in North-Western India. This rate of speed, however, of course implies that the traveller must 'steal a few hours from the night,' involving as it does so many stages, each more or less a source of delay according to the nature and variety of the equine freaks with which the journey may happen to be enlivened.

My first look out as daylight appeared was upon the Parisnath 'range'—for, as a sea has its islands, so there are hills on the plains of Bengal. We were now in one of these elevated districts. While peering forth from the window into the cold

grey dawn, I encountered my friend's nightcap in neighbourly proximity, its wearer being at that moment engaged in a similar survey of the land ; and emerging from our respective caravans, we had our first walk on the magnificent Grand Trunk Road. The scene before us by no means tallied with preconceived ideas. A low chain of peaked eminences, clothed with jungle to the top, extended for miles before us, displaying a secure and healthy domain for the wild animals with which they were populated.

In the dim morning light the night dews were rising in smoke from the leafy heights, or resting in fleecy clouds among the branches below. At the terminus of the range towered the celebrated 'Hill of Parisnath' proper, a high mountain rising 4,624 feet above the level of the sea, and at that moment girdled by a dissolving chain of clouds. Here with its crags and peaks piled up into a leaden sky, stood the loftiest of the few breezy elevations of Bengal.

Why dont the perspiring inhabitants of Calcutta go up and be cooled, in imitation of the good example set them by their brethren of Madras and Bombay ? The journals of the capital are at present dealing with that question. So far as I can understand the subject at issue, it would appear, that with the view of something being done the people of Calcutta are waiting on the Government of Bengal, and that the Government of Bengal is waiting on the people of Calcutta, while the winds wanton idly on the brows of Parisnath. There are already buildings on the hill erected by Government in 1861 as a sanatorium for troops, and there *were* sick soldiers within them ; but these are now all away, dead or alive ; and the consideration

comes to be, how far the inroads of fever and other troubles, which brought about this result, were due to defective arrangements, or how far they were attributable to the inevitable effects of a place where terrible storms and floods in their season make havoc of bungalows, verandahs, and all the surroundings of human life in India.

Parisnath, however, is not utterly deserted. During the first three months of the year thousands of Buddhist pilgrims, called Jains, frequent the hill to consecrate the memory of twenty-four saints, of whom Parisnath was the chief, and whose shrines, one for each, stand on different peaks near the summit. The Jains believe that these holy men were alone of all the world gifted with sufficient intelligence to comprehend the Creator; that they chose this mountain as a retreat for penance and prayer, and that they ascended thence into heaven, leaving their footprints behind them as these now appear on the floors of the twenty-four small chapels. There is also a Jain temple on the hill, and a bazaar where strangers may procure a few simple articles of food.

The Anglo-Indian mode of ascending Parisnath is to be borne in a crib on the shoulders of coolies. A writer in the 'Calcutta Englishman' describes it thus :—

The ascent is accomplished in doolies, or, more properly, dandies, a kind of rude hammock, suspended from a pole. In one of these the traveller lies comfortably enough with a pillow to support the head; but as it is difficult to carry an umbrella, it is wise to take the additional precaution of having a water-proof cloak or large shawl to hang, tent-wise, over the doolie pole in case of rain. With the same article folded and hung in like manner over the head above, it might be quite safe to make the ascent at any time, as the road winds under trees all the way, and there is generally a fresh breeze.

From the succeeding extract it would appear that the aspect of the hill and the surrounding view combine with the mountain breezes to render Parisnath a charming place of residence. Let us hope, for the sake of our countrymen in these parts, for whom no other sanatorium exists nearer than Darjeeling, that it may yet be found available.

Go where you will, a panorama of varied loveliness opens before you. You look down over bold precipices or wooded slopes on ridge after ridge of billowy hills covered with foliage of the most vivid green, while far below lie the wide plains, through which you can trace the straight line of the Trunk Road and the serpentine courses of the Damooda, the Jumna, and the Barrakur, till they vanish in the dim horizon.

Everywhere at Parisnath is wild and lovely beauty, and the singing of the birds and the freshness of the air alike remind the wanderer of his far distant English or Scottish home. It also appears to enjoy a complete exemption from various reptiles and insects. There are no snakes, no scorpions, no mosquitoes, cockroaches, or other more domestic plagues; and though we certainly once heard the far-off roar of a tiger in the lower jungle, and once also tracked a leopard's footprints round the house, all experience proves the perfect safety of the loneliest ramble on the heights during the hours of daylight.

'Obadiah — left the caravanserai early in the morning, and pursued his way through the plains of Hindostan' is a familiar passage of school reading in which my mind was wont to depict the bright-robed figure of Obadiah sauntering onwards in the pleasant pursuit of a shining path. But here the vision of fancy was confronted with the logic of facts and dissolved in gloom. For it now appeared that the said Obadiah, on that same 'early morning,' may possibly have set forth on his journey shivering with cold, and in view perhaps of such cloud-capped heights as we are accustomed to associate, not with the home of rambling

Asiatics, so much as with the poetry of Ossian or the birthplace of Tell. Such certainly was the scene, and this the condition of the wayfarers whom we encountered on the Grand Trunk Road now and on subsequent occasions 'early in the morning,' closely enveloped in wrappers as they 'pursued their way' with bent, cringing figures and cold shivering limbs.

A peculiar erection, visible at intervals by the wayside, appeared in this rugged and isolated portion of our route; namely a rustic nest apparently well supplied with straw, elevated on four bamboo poles perhaps twenty feet above the earth, and manifestly intended for the use of some creature having wings, or, at least, great muscular agility. These, as it turned out, were the retiring chambers of the *chokydars* (or guardians) in charge of this solitary region of jungle and beasts of prey. We had not the satisfaction of witnessing the ascent of any of these functionaries: such an eyrie, however, in itself warranted the conclusion that the Mofussil watchman of 'that ilk' had no experience of pulmonary or rheumatic disorders, seeing that his very existence depended on the daily performance of an exercise which implied no small proficiency in the gymnastic art. It was equally evident that once within this strange receptacle, and stretched on its bed of straw, he was out of harm's way, and in strains suggestive of Chaucer's exquisite line—

'Entuned in hire nose ful swetely'—

might securely respond from dreamland to the jackal's bark at the pillars of his dwelling, or the roar of the panther in the jungle across the way.

At Doomree we made our first acquaintance with that cele-

brated tenement a *dāk* bungalow—house of refuge, restaurant, and dormitory of the Indian plains. This is simply a low square cottage, roofed with tiles or thatch, and comprising several small apartments surrounded by a wide verandah. Like other hostelrys it professes to be thrice-blessed to the traveller in its aids to comfort, providing service, refreshment, and repose. The first of these requisites is rendered by a *khansuma* and a *khitmagar* (cook and waiter), usually a pair of obsequious fellows of most melancholy visage, who either in pretence or reality do not understand a single sentence of English, notwithstanding that their lives are spent in the service of those whose only language it is. The refreshment consists frequently of nothing more than brown bread (musty almost of necessity) and *mourghy*, or chicken, which the people of these parts, with a dash of sanguinary pleasantry, style ‘sudden death.’ But not without reason, for the biped may be seen, as visitors enter the house, gaily promenading the compound, and the interval between the shriek that signalizes its capture and its presence on the table, metamorphosed into a smoking dish of curry, may be estimated at thirty-five minutes on the average.

When the traveller is overcome with fatigue, sleep may be courted on a bare *charpoy*, which, with a table and two or three chairs, constitutes the furniture of the room. Altogether the little chamber, with its blank white walls and plain scanty accessories, might be likened to one of our model prison cells, but for the atmospheric brightness in which it is enveloped. Certainly, however, no cell could be drearier when at night a feeble lamp scarcely serves to pierce the darkness, emitting along with its mournful flicker a strong rancid smell. Then, too, the

lugubrious *khitmagur* appears at call, flitting silently from somewhere out of the gloom of the verandah, and during the long evening, from sunset till bedtime, not a sound disturbs the utter solitude of this 'sweet home,' unless it be the sturdy drone of the mosquitoes which usually frequent it in strong force, and thus make known by bugle-call their own presence and their victim's coming fate. Hence it is that so many travellers prefer the jolt and jangle by night of the *dāk* gharry to the hospitality of the *dāk* bungalow; availing themselves of the latter for rest and refreshment only during the hottest period of the day. This, as a rule, was the plan we ourselves adopted after arranging with our companions the next place of meeting. Any misunderstanding, or forgetfulness, in respect of this compact would have been fatal to our prospects of reunion, since to keep together was impossible, and through the inexplicable vagaries of man and beast we were often lost to each other for hours together by the way. But the most agreeable and earliest sought provision of the *dāk* bungalow, as each gharry-crumpled, hair-tangled, dust-sprinkled 'arrival' shuffles within its precincts, is the bath; which, as will readily be understood, is not elaborated on the Turkish method. Rather, indeed, this delightful accessory of the cottage commonly presents the anomaly of a bathing-room in lieu of a bath—a place where the bather crouches on an inclined brick floor, while the *khitmagar*, or his own servant, standing over him administers a thorough 'sousing' from *chatties* (earthen pots) filled with cold water, the deluge thus created gravitating to an aperture in the wall, and thence anywhere into the sunshine without.

At the time of which I speak the impression left by the ter-

rible scenes of the Mutiny was still sufficiently fresh to influence some minds with a feeling of apprehension. No doubt public order had been long restored. Nana Sahib and a few minor rebels, skulking in their respective retirements, were all that could now be supposed to remain of the revolutionary powers. It might thus be taken for granted that, so far as any action on the part of the leaders of rebellion was concerned, the chapter of horrors had been brought to a close. Yet it was only reasonable to imagine, that in the secret depths of many fanatical breasts the embers of disaffection still smouldered, ready to blaze up in isolated acts of vengeance as a victim came quietly in the way. And thus it happened, no doubt, that while we were preparing for this North-West journey, several good friends in Calcutta cheered my mind with hints of possible danger. One of these, however, somewhat more practical in his sympathy than the rest, suggested that I should provide myself with a revolver, making me at the same time a present of one with which, he said, I would be able to 'blow up' any scoundrel who might venture to assail me. The terrible weapon was accompanied by two bags containing a supply of powder and lead sufficient to exterminate a whole band of *dacoits*.

Well, we were now fairly in the depths of the Mofussil. The hour of peril, if such existed, had arrived; it behoved me to inspect the revolver and ascertain that all was in order. This, I may as well confess, was a most needful procedure in my case, seeing that I had never in my life once handled that celebrated firearm, and might not be able to use it without some observation of the mechanism. But any difficulty on this score was immediately dispelled by the condition in which I found the im-

plement itself. It was rusty, dislocated, hopelessly unfitted to harm a fly! My friend had trusted in his servant; his servant had trusted in him; and my folly in trusting either was visible in the thing before me.

Reparation of the injury being now impossible, I was about to cast the gift away as lumber when a happy thought struck me—there is a moral influence in the mere symbol of power. This weapon certainly could not injure the most vulnerable of rascals, but might it not rouse his fears? How often had not precisely such another disjointed engine of war, confidently wielded, served to protect an intended victim, and even to frighten a community out of their wits? As a French glove fits the hand, so did its morocco case my dilapidated revolver. Thus, its existence indicated and its impotency concealed, a place among our baggage was reserved for the innocent firearm, which became, to successive dusky attendants, an object of special regard when jauntily dandled in the hand, or laid down with just an audible clank beside the rugs and shawls on the bungalow table at night. Although, therefore, I neither felt nor saw danger, who will make bold to say that my excellent friend in Calcutta did not provide me after all with a needful weapon of defence?

Having decided that Shergotty, distant 89 miles, should be our next stage, we started in the afternoon, and arrived there on the following morning. The country between these stations is little cultivated, nor does it seem well suited for agricultural operations, consisting mainly of undulating sandy soil covered with stunted vegetation. The hilly irregularities of the way converge into the Dunwah Pass—a picturesque valley shadowed

by overhanging cliffs clothed with leaf and stem, and presenting a view of dry watercourses bordered with rich shrubbery, winding into the recesses of the woods. It being impossible for a single, fagged horse to drag the heavily-laden gharry up such an incline (700 feet in one mile) as the road here presents, that task is confided to a band of coolies, who are always in attendance for the purpose. With great demonstration this elegant group surround and seize the gharry, each man wherever he can obtain a hold, and adapt their movements to a series of concerted yells.

Sherghotty, which is a small town in the district of Behar, much used as a caravansarai, was crowded with rows of wag-gons and *hackries*, piles of cotton bales, and groups of wearied bullocks chewing the cud in little courts or compounds. A scene of animated life at all times, Sherghotty happened to be at that moment in a feverish condition of excitement, by reason of a marriage procession which with a crowded attendance was then perambulating its thoroughfares. We heard the noise intended for music, and just caught a glimpse of the chief actor in the ceremony as he turned a corner and passed into the principal street. The Sherghotty bridegroom was arrayed with a magnificence calculated no doubt to do honour to the place. His dress of red satin especially must have shone glorious in the eyes of the beholders, as, exalted on the back of a high lanky steed, and surrounded, among other attractive accompaniments, by quite a blaze of garish little flags waving in the hands of attendants, he held his triumphant course down the crowded highway. To the Hindoo mind the position of being the observed of all observers is peculiarly charming; and there is, therefore, nothing to hinder the

conclusion that Napoleon did not enter Paris after a victory with a prouder sense of dignity than that of this Bengalee bridegroom parading the streets of Sherghotty in his flaming coat of scarlet.

The annals of Behar are renowned in Indian history. Here it was that, before Delhi acquired its pre-eminence, the kings of Magadha are said to have ruled in a style of unexampled splendour as 'lords paramount and emperors of India.' The district is still famous for the extent and variety of its manufactures, which, besides more solid and useful productions, include spirits and perfumes distilled from flowers and sandalwood. We were now within the sphere of that great line of hills which traverses the whole country between this point and Bombay. Immediately beyond Sherghotty, we entered a tract of land which would have resembled one of Horatio M'Culloch's pictures of the Scottish highlands but for the fiery flood of sunshine in which it was bathed. This was a wide heath sprinkled with loose stones and isolated mounds of granite, the vista appropriately terminating in a barren mountain line. On the left, however, the memories of home were dispelled by an adjacent scene of purely tropical luxuriance—of far-stretching hills densely covered with trees, and receding out of view, range behind range, like an undulating ocean of leaves. There is no such picture among the 'peaks of Albion.' Here was a long perspective of mountain forests to which, I presume, no human being had yet dared to climb. Clothed though they were with an evergreen mantle, and towering in a placid sky, who would seek to penetrate into such fastnesses of nature, where beasts of prey crouch within caves of trap-rock, or wander in a twilight of arching boughs?

When, however, we had passed an old temple, the name of

which was given us as *Budgenāth*, romantically situated on the shoulder of a hill, we saw no more of vale and mountain, but emerged once for all into the unbroken plain spanned by a clear dome of sky.

It so happened that the shrine of *Budgenāth* was, at that moment, an object of much pious consideration, for thither tended the large crowd of pilgrims with which the road was thronged. Among these no less a personage than the Rajah of Bundelkund was on his way to offer gifts and perform penance there. And such a visitor imparted sanctity as well as popularity to the occasion, for the Hindoo deities are understood to recognize the attractions of wealth and state, and to be susceptible of their universal influence.

At Nowbutpore, fourteen miles from Benares, we met the main body of the Rajah's followers encamped by the wayside amidst a profusion of tents, camels, and elephants—a motley group of coolies, *syces*, *zemindars*, and tinselled courtiers, which it must have cost His Highness a heavy purse to maintain.

During the night we had crossed the Soane—at that season of the year nothing more than a wide bed of sand, in the midst of which an occasional narrow stream shows how little the thirsty sun has left of what was lately a great rolling river. Now, however, the railway is carried across the Soane by a magnificent bridge.

In all such emergencies as the intervention of a fordable river the gharry is dragged by bullocks,—a patient, submissive class of animals which trudge over the sand and splash through the flood without indulging in rests or troublesome freaks of temper. We were doomed to feel the want of their assistance in a 'situation' to which we awoke at a later hour of the night. Beyond

all doubt we were in the midst of water, with, horrible to relate! a crew of fiendish-looking figures, dimly visible in the starlight, dancing, splashing, and shouting around us. My first dreamy impression, as I raised myself on my elbow, was that of being in my berth at sea on the homeward voyage. But why was the water so shallow? It then flashed on my bewildered brain that the steamer had grounded on the noisy sands of Madras, or among the breakers that wash the shores of Galle. In due time, however, it became apparent that the gharry was stuck fast in a somewhat extensive pool of mud encountered in the course of a *détour* which the *gorriwallah* had been obliged to make in consequence of the breaking down of a bridge only a few hours before. A troop of poor shivering coolies who had rushed to the rescue were doing their best to extricate us,—a feat which they accomplished after a little more pushing and many more cries. The predicament of Gophall during this *mêlée*, trembling on his perch aloft, was precisely that of a stranded mariner. As he did not choose to encounter the cold bath that immediately awaited his descent, his resolution seems to have been to render important service by means of instructions issued from his commanding position, and so being blest by nature with a lusty voice, his shouts served to swell the chorus of confusion, while his corporeal *embonpoint* gave so much more weight to the difficulty which it was the object of all this hubbub to overcome. Half spanning a high ravine, and broken fairly in twain, appeared the bridge whose misfortune was the source of ours, looking all the more a wreck in the cheerless gloom of a morning that could scarcely be said to have dawned.

It was on the forenoon of this day that we were gratified

with a sight often alluded to as one of the indigenous wonders of India,—that, namely, of a *crawling pilgrim*. The wretch, as we first beheld him, seemed to be literally swimming in the thick dust of the road. His plan, however, really was to measure his length thereon, stretching out his right hand to mark the ground as far ahead as possible. To that point he was privileged to get up and walk before repeating the act of prostration, which on the whole he continued to do with a facility which betokened some familiarity with this peculiar style of locomotion. He was a sturdy fellow, else would he not have been equal to his task; and as we passed him oscillating close to the wheels of our vehicle, he turned upon us a pair of glowing black eyes with a look which, whatever it may have meant, certainly did not imply either shame for his own position or respect for ours.

The value of self-torture as a means of earning divine regard, although by no means confined to Brahminical teaching, is one of the primary tenets of that creed. We are, of course, to understand that the presumptive advantages of an excursion like that referred to are not of this world, and it has been jocularly affirmed that some of these travellers are stimulated by such a prospect in the next, as mountains of hot *chupatties* and savoury oceans of *ghee*! Whither this particular pilgrim was bound we knew not, but it may have been to some far distant goal. A gentleman in Benares informed us that he had seen and conversed with a muscular priest who had actually so journeyed from the temple of Juggernaut in Orissa to that city (a distance of 670 miles), where he was then residing, a distinguished object of popular admiration and respect.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HEATHEN CAPITAL.

Never, believe me,
 Appear the Immortals,
 Never alone.—COLERIDGE.

These astrologers undertook to determine the course of a man's character and life from the configuration of the stars at the moment of his birth.—WHEWELL.



T was still early in the day when, after passing through some miles of road bordered with trees, we were suddenly confronted by the Ganges with the holy city of Benares in full view, standing on the opposite bank high above the stream.

Having crossed a bridge of boats and clambered up the steep incline, we were at once driven to the hotel (situated at the distance of three miles), through a wide-spread scene of ancient dwellings crumbling into dust, and deserted temples from which the glory had departed with their gods. The suburbs of the city however, beyond these symbols of death, were alive with a smiling luxuriance of crops, among which we could recognize in many forms the familiar aspect of European vegetation. There, undoubtedly, lay fields of turnips, peas, carrots, cabbage, potatoes, and barley, blooming amidst a

variety of fine trees, including the *neem*, mango, tamarind, and palm. But these rich plantations were everywhere encircled by dingy walls of mud, whose unseemly embrace detracted, in some measure, from the enchanting freshness of their natural appearance.

Very soon after our arrival at the hotel, we had the good fortune to witness a marriage procession of unusual splendour. The son of the Maharajah of Benares had, as the landlord informed us, just formed a suitable alliance, and the occasion had manifestly been deemed worthy of a very magnificent ceremonial. First came an outrider on a monstrous elephant, the oscillation of whose great proboscis cleared the way as effectually as if it had swung with that intent. Next appeared a band of musicians, followed by the bodyguard of his Highness the Maharajah, black but comely, in trim soldierly attire. These were succeeded by a troop of fourteen or fifteen richly caparisoned camels with riders, and a couple of high functionaries on elephants. Then, following one another, came the 'happy pair,' each seated in a *dhoolie* glittering with silver and gold ornamentation, and borne on men's shoulders. The magnificence of their apparel was partly hidden by their position, but we could see that it was literally laden with jewels and precious stones, which even hung in dangling pendants over their brows. The youth looked straight before him, a circumstance which might betoken an excess either of dignity or diffidence; but the bride, who was pretty, favoured our small English party with a pleasant inspection as she passed. A regiment of native soldiers now advanced, succeeded by another troop of perhaps a dozen elephants, adorned with cloths and

howdahs of gold and silver work. Among the riders of these appeared the Maharajah himself splendidly attired, seated on a *howdah* with a silver canopy, and nodding familiarly from his elevated cradle to friends and acquaintances below. But hark ! the bag-pipes ! Not surely at a wedding march in Benares ? And yet our well accustomed ears can scarcely be mistaken. The sound waxes louder and nearer, and proves to be the veritable music of the Scottish hills. There they come, four stalwart pipers marching abreast, as they ‘blaw wi’ birr,’ entertaining the Benares public with the strains of an old Highland Strathspey. Shade of Jessie Cameron ! these Rajahs were our friends ; and it was only meet that the pipes which sounded the downfall of rebellion in Lucknow, should be playing in the wake of this Hindoo ceremonial.

The pipers preceded a detachment of the 92nd Highlanders then located in Benares, and welcome in a distant land of troubles shone the famous tartan supported by the bright energy of the men who wore it. A well-knit powerful band they were, clad in spotless white jackets and green tartan kilts—a dress which, considering the attire of the native crowd around them, no one will deny was at once well-suited to the climate and remarkably decent for the place.

A ‘holy city’ is a familiar term. But the odour of sanctity which devout Roman Catholics, for instance, attach to Rome, or Christians, in general, to Jerusalem—bears little analogy to that which the Hindoos ascribe to Benares. The world indeed does not contain such another example of urban consecration. It may even be said that the city is deified in its whole material mass, for there is scarcely a spot which is not associated with

some unseen power. Of the strength and prevalence of this feeling we have ample proof. The wealth of *rajah* and *ma-harajah* is freely given to maintain the shrines. Now, as of old, the streets are thronged with pious visitors from all parts of the country a thousand miles round. Wicked men, stricken with remorse, come hither to wash away their sins in supposed cleansing waters. The sickly and infirm, fearing the near approach of death, are fain to make the journey while strength remains, if haply they may breathe their last in the hallowed atmosphere of Benares.

Nor have the extraordinary changes throughout the country during the last few years affected in any appreciable degree the influence of this *alma mater* of Hindooism—if we except the fact, that although its Brahmins are still regarded as high-priests of the faith, the popularity of Sanscrit learning even here seems to have declined with the growth of English schools and colleges in Calcutta. The monstrous fabric of superstition gives no sign of decay, and Benares is at this moment, as in the days of dynasties that have long passed away, regarded as the very gateway of Heaven by the piously disposed among 140,000,000 souls.

The strange dramatic tale of the sacred city may be traced backwards through the history of the country until it becomes lost in the shadows of immemorial cycles. Among the records of a period more than two thousand years gone by, it figures as the city of Devadasa, capital of that kingdom of Kasi, to which I have alluded as the ancient centre of Indian wealth and power. Even then it seems to have been equally the stronghold of Indian idolatry. In the present day Benares, besides its

numerous sacred tanks, wells, and other shrines, with their host of mystic associations, idol images, and attendant priests, has been ascertained to contain no fewer than 1,454 temples, of which upwards of 1,000 are Sivalas, or Hindoo pagodas. But more astonishing and ridiculous, perhaps, than the hideous creation itself is the plan by which it is regulated—the method which rules this madness. Out of the bewildering multitude of Hindoo deities with their separate characters and attributes, a representative system has been elaborated. What conveys the idea of an executive council of gods awaits the pilgrim's arrival in Benares. His first act is to report himself to *Bina-yaka*. If he fears the approach of death, he ought to importune *Alprmteswar*, who has power to avert the catastrophe; but, let the King of Terrors come when he may, a whisper from *Tarakeswar*, ere the vital spark has fled, will abide in the believer's ear to cheer his heart and direct his steps through the valley of death. *Annupurna* is purveyor of the means of existence and the averter of famine. *Bhairnoth* protects the inhabitants in general, warding off evil spirits, and dispensing the blessings of immortality to those who expire within the walls.

Such details afford a glimpse of that teeming world of the imagination in which the Hindoo mind delights to revel.

The nature and routine of the thousand shrines of Benares are thus sufficiently apparent. Among them are the *Gyan Bapee*, or Well of Knowledge, whence emanates wisdom; the *Kalkup*, or Well of Fate, with whose waters men imbibe a knowledge of the future; and the Manikarnika well, which consists of the tears of Vishnu,—each and all fetid pools surrounded by a constant succession of worshippers.

We cannot wonder that the inhabitants of a city whose affairs are thus based on the silliest creations of fancy, should lack practical energy for the prosecution of commerce. Business enough, as I shall have occasion to show, enlivens it throughout; but that is chiefly of an artificial nature, and much devoted to those articles of merchandise which supply the requirements of ignorance and fanaticism. Benares, no doubt, has its manufactures of silk and cotton, together with gold and silver lace. Paintings in *talc*, elaborately carved brazen vessels, and bright-coloured wooden toys are also produced in abundance. But, more perhaps than any of these, the appliances of astrology are objects of public attraction, and, therefore, an important stock in trade. Books on the science of divination, and coarsely executed diagrams of the heavenly bodies surrounded by cabalistic shapes and figures, appear in the shop windows. All may buy and read, but the skill to interpret the mysteries is the patrimony of the Brahmins, whose services, more especially on the occasions of births and marriages, are always in requisition for that purpose.

Being the headquarters of an extensive Opium Agency, Benares furnishes an excellent specimen of a factory of the famous drug, where hundreds of native workmen are employed, wading almost knee-deep in large vats in the process of preparation. Soporific as the plant is in the ordinary modes of use, it is said to have no greater influence on those engaged all day in its manipulation than that of begetting a drowsy feeling at an early hour of the night.

As the days of government monopolies are numbered, I presume this unique trade of supplying the Celestial Empire with

the material of its visions of bliss will soon be an affair of conscience for individual consideration.

Early on the following morning, accompanied by our obliging landlord, Mr. Thomas, I set forth on the interesting tour of Benares; and here it may be stated, for the guidance of others following our course, that friends in Calcutta are ever ready to furnish introductions to English residents in the cities of the North-West, although, the better to make use of our limited time, we had ourselves declined that proffered kindness. My guide first directed his steps to the *Doorga Koond*, a large tank with a temple adjoining it, both dedicated to the goddess Doorga. Practically, however, the edifice is consecrated to the monkey-god Hanuman, referred to in a former portion of this narrative; and here dwell a very numerous family, comprising young and old, of the worshipful fraternity of black-faced apes, supposed to be his lineal descendants.

No travelling menagerie or zoological garden on earth contains such a collection of these creatures (some of them hideous and dangerous-looking old rascals), as may be seen in the immediate vicinity of the *Doorga Koond*, scampering on the highway, grinning and chattering from wall or housetop, overrunning the filthy courts of the temple, and swinging from peak to corner of its elaborately carved little tower. The only other occupants of the court at the moment were several agonized-looking devotees, sitting cross-legged on the flags, having plates filled with marigold before them, and droning an interminable wail of prayers. Other emotions, however, seemed to animate the smiling Brahmin in attendance, who, opening the door of the shrine, favoured us with an inspection of the goddess—a doll

figure decorated with wreaths of the golden flower just mentioned, and seated within a receptacle very much resembling an English drawing-room grate adorned for the summer months.

Thence descending to the Ganges, we embarked in a *dinghy* (one of the native canoes) of which there were many in waiting, and passed down the entire front of the city. I regret having failed in the attempt to obtain a photographic representation of the scene we then witnessed, for by no other means could it be realized. Even at that early hour the sun's rays had flooded the land with brightness, converting the river into a bed of light, and glancing in fiery scintillations from the gilded spires that surmounted some of the city temples. Reared on the high bank overhead, Benares gave unmistakable symptoms of being slowly drawn towards the bosom of the beloved Gunga. The priesthood, besides averring that this city was once built of gold, although afterwards converted into stone because of the sins of the people, maintain that, notwithstanding appearances to the contrary, it does not pertain to the terrestrial globe (which, according to Hindoo tradition, rests on the thousand-headed serpent), but that it stands isolated on the points of Siva's trident, whence its supposed immunity from earthquakes.

Whatever may be the fact as regards the geological question, the heathen capital, from this point of view, actually looks as if it had been shaken by a subterranean force. The solid masonry is in many parts dislocated and destroyed. Certain portions, indeed, have already disappeared, and others, judging from the oblique gables and broken walls which mar the line of buildings, seem likely soon to follow. As Pompeii, nestling at the foot of Vesuvius, was finally ruined by its fires, so may

Benares, embracing and worshipping the Ganges, be doomed to destruction by its floods.

Meanwhile, however, a great city, bright with sunshine, towered above the stream where its population of 300,000 idolaters delight to pass the morning hours in exercises of devotion. The picture it presented was striking and unique. Large square buildings (some of them six stories high), perforated to the roof with little apertures by way of windows, and sundry indescribable structures of smaller dimensions were mingled with a crowd of Hindoo pagodas. Above these and their numerous short but ornate spires towered the stately columns of the great Mahommedan mosque, which history tells us the Emperor Aurungzebe, with a refinement of insult designed to infuriate the Hindoos, reared on the site of one of their favourite old temples, with the very stones of which the latter had been composed! Ostensibly, at least, his success has been signal—Islam, from graceful minarets about 150 feet high looks down on all the architectural pretensions of Brahminism in Benares. The constructive features of the place comprised some curious details. Tiny green gangways spanned yawning depths of stone-work; ladder-like stairs gave access to elevated doors in high blank gables; miniature gardens were blooming, and sable figures promenading, on the flat roofs of the houses. The extraordinary jumble of masonry (supplied from the quarries of Chumar close by) which constitutes the city of Benares, is painted to some extent of a brownish-red colour. It extends nearly three miles along one bank of the Ganges, with which, in addition to a series of pathways leading down the steep earthen slope, it is connected by broad stone *ghauts* of wide and handsome construction.

But the chief attraction of Benares on that glorious morning lay in its scenes of animated life. The banks, tinted with many-coloured clothes spread out to dry, were resonant with the progress of industrial employments, the mason, sawyer, and carpenter being severally visible at work in their sheds. A picturesque crowd in showy vestments of red, green, or yellow moved up and down the steps of the great *ghaut*, branching off in little streams by invisible streets or passages at either side, and swarming out and in through the shadowy perspective of the main street in front. The city seemed to be astir as if on some great holiday occasion, and we learned with surprise that we were witnessing an occurrence of everyday life. It was the proper hour of devotion, when no good citizen of Benares who coveted the favour of the gods would fail to kneel in prayer at the brink of the Ganges, if not to immerse himself wholly in its turbid waters. Among the congregated thousands of both sexes, every individual was or had been engaged in the act of prayer. Some were bathing, some standing solemnly in the water with uplifted hands. Hundreds sat shaded by huge umbrellas in covered rafts, dressing and disrobing (very simple processes), or diligently mumbling long prayers amidst the loud chatter of their companions; while the bank was lined with bending figures of pilgrims filling their brass *lotas* with the holy fluid, wherewith to sprinkle the altars of the city gods. On an isolated stone pillar, built (for devotional purposes, I presume) well out in the stream, a human form, in a monkish shroud, knelt motionless in prayer, like a sculptured image of adoration. In little square caves or cells, constructed at intervals beside the river, undraped priests of

the Ganges crouched, like a series of ill-favoured family portraits framed in stone, ready in this comfortless receipt of custom to impart their blessing to those who might desire to purchase the boon. Right over their shaggy heads, on the flat blocks of masonry forming the roofs of these dens, other devotees were engaged in the utterance of loud prayers accompanied by nimble genuflexions. One individual was especially conspicuous for pious enthusiasm, standing upright on his pedestal and gesticulating violently at the sun, precisely as if he were accusing the luminary of some misdemeanour, and daring it to mortal combat—an exercise which he alternated with repeated acts of prostration, at the termination of each striking, with no gentle tap, his brow against the stone. Approaching the ‘burning *ghaut*’ (everywhere an institution of the Ganges), we found the place black and charred with yet smoking cinders; for, as has been already hinted, the hideous practice of partially consuming the corpse with fire, and thus launching it into the stream, is a popular mode among Hindoos of dealing with their dead, wherever the Ganges is accessible to consecrate, as it is supposed to do, every wreck of humanity committed to its keeping. Hence such varieties in the wild spectacle before us as a couple of pariah dogs at the brink of the river, devouring what had been left by the flames of a contiguous pyre. It appeared, however, that an occasional horror of this kind mingling with the bathers served neither to disturb their equanimity nor to allay their thirst.

A number of boats of the *boghlio* and *dinghy* forms, common to the country, were moving lazily on the river, which seemed to flow out of and into a quiet prospect of fields and sun-

shine. Even on the opposite bank of the stream, over which this great nucleus of life impended, a scene of thorough contrast presented itself—a tract of sand merging into a rich rural plain, as still and silent as if the tumultuous city that overlooked it had been a thousand miles away.

Landing at the great *ghaut* we found the very steps embellished with the representation of deities. Gods and goddesses, black, white, and brown, sprawled at our feet, extending unsightly limbs and heads to be trodden upon; and still as we ascended we encountered objects pertaining to the teeming Hindoo Pantheon. Not an inch of space was unappropriated. All available nooks and corners, every projecting ledge, was burdened with some monstrous shape of organized life, or some semblance of a temple, into which the people threw flowers of jessamine and marigold, together with water from the river, muttering invocations all the while.

It need scarcely be told that the interior of such a city does not afford a very pleasant or refreshing promenade. Far above the din and dust, wise men and women were visible, parading their respective housetops, where indeed, amidst a refreshing display of plants and flowers, those who have the good fortune to possess such a place of retreat are accustomed to spend the greater portion of the day and to sleep at night in small wooden chambers open to the breeze. At diminutive windows in large buildings appeared clusters of eager faces, chiefly pertaining to the gentler sex, looking forth on the interesting microcosm below. Some of the close, narrow streets were rendered all the more stifling from being festooned from roof to basement with ropes, whereon the many-coloured garments

of the population were hung out to dry. Such an interminable prospect of suffocating little shops, with their owners busy at work within—calico printers, and braziers plying tiny blocks and hammers—printsellers, drapers, toy-merchants, victuallers, all cooped up amidst their respective wares, comprising *dhooties* and *sarees*, printed and dyed cloths, gold laced vestments, specimens of divinity in wood or brass, astrological books and diagrams, jumping Jacks and spinning-tops—grain, jessamine, marigold—and such a moving mass of human beings intermingled with camels, elephants, and bulls, is, I imagine, only to be witnessed in Benares.

The animal last-named occupies a distinguished place among the living multitude, being the 'Brahmin bull' consecrated to Siva by the priest, and marked with the sign of a trident. Thus popularly introduced to Benares society, the creature traverses the busy streets with an air of nonchalance indicative of a mind at ease, eating green dainties from the hands of passers-by.

But the crowded picture of Benares includes a much more offensive element of citizenship than the Brahmin bull. For this is the central *rendezvous* of fakirs and other religious mendicants from all parts of the North-West, who accordingly line the public highway in great force, with foul tangled hair and frightfully distorted limbs, whining for the bread of beggary.

The well dressed portion of the people are habited in silk or cotton robes, among which brightness and variety of hue are held as expressive of gentility. As evening approached we observed several respectable families, arrayed in their best for the occasion, come forth in spangled groups to enjoy the refreshing

hour of sundown on their balconies over the street. In the light of our Western experience, such a spectacle was ridiculously suggestive of another similar, though infinitely more tawdry, show once common and not yet obsolete in England, which is always associated with an invitation to 'walk up,' and an injunction to 'be in time.' In truth, Benares seemed to be in holiday trim, and teeming with merry-andrews.

We did not go the round of the temples, nor is it my purpose to dwell on details which other books have already made familiar. But preeminent in popularity among the sacred edifices, albeit a foul place in a poor locality, stands the Temple of Bisheshwar, dedicated to Shiva, and misnamed the 'Golden Temple,' so called, however, on account of two of its three spires being covered with gilded copper. *Bisheshwar* seems to be regarded as the patron in chief of Benares, its acting guardian, the god *Bhairnoth*, being represented as no more than his *khotwal*, or magistrate.

No magnificent cathedral or gilded basilica in Europe, where music and incense float amidst saintly pictures and masonic splendours, attracts such a large congregation of worshippers as this filthy little pagoda in the metropolis of heathendom. We entered it by a narrow passage, filled with a jostling, vociferating crowd of going and returning devotees, whence we emerged on the sacred court—a high-walled quadrangle plashing with water, in which a number of sacred bulls dabbled their hoofs, and looked quite at home as they munched the choice morsels of food with which they were fed by the visitors.

This, however, was not the temple itself; and next, through another close entrance equally crammed, noisy, and odoriferous,

we literally fought our way into the principal hall. Here was the great centre of attraction—the well of Bisheshwar's descent from the earth, railed in and deep, with an iron grating over the water below, and the *lingam* or emblem of worship affixed to a shaft rising from the centre. Hundreds of men and women thronged around it, dropping in the universally esteemed flowers of jessamine and marigold (of which an accumulated mass lay at the bottom), or, failing these, a more humble offering of Ganges water from brazen *lotas*, muttering the while some words of prayer, and saluting the iron fence with their foreheads. Strong, furious-looking fellows elbowed their way roughly to the front, rushing in hot haste and with scowling faces to invite the divine favour. Mingled, however, with such devout desperadoes appeared youthful and sickly-looking figures, together with some very aged persons, to whom the like energy of devotion was impossible. We observed one woman so spent with years that it must have cost her almost a final effort to totter to the spot.

The presiding genius of the well was a Brahmin seated near at hand, clothed in a robe and skull-cap of scarlet. At his feet lay a vessel filled with water from the turbid depths; a precious modicum of the healing fluid which had been rendered doubly efficacious from having received his blessing. This valuable specific he was dispensing to a ceaseless stream of worshippers—a small share to each crouching applicant, who received the filthy liquid conserved in both hands, and greedily drank it up. At the priest's side lay a box nearly filled with the *pice* which the people were rapidly pouring into it—a process which this worthy collector of the 'Golden Temple' marked from time to time with a furtive glance. It was further

instructive to observe that those who came empty-handed got nothing but holy water, while those who contributed *pice* received a blessing to boot, which the benefactor pronounced audibly, with his hand on the suppliant's head.

Thence we passed into another chamber of smaller dimensions, having in the centre a similar well or basin, to which Hindoo tradition ascribes more miraculous properties still, but which can only be approached by the priesthood, and those whom they choose to favour. This inner sanctuary was wet and filthy in a yet more nauseous degree, and the clamour of the mob that filled it was aggravated not a little by the interminable clangour of a row of bells suspended in the entrance-way, which successive visitors set in motion by a 'cuff,' with the view, as we were told, of announcing their arrival to the god.

Being curious to hear the native account of such a procedure, I requested my companion to put the question in Hindostanee to one of the two priests in attendance at the door. The personage thus interrogated was a vigorous young fellow of comely exterior; for a Brahmin priest, as belonging to an hereditary order, is not necessarily fanatical of expression, or worn grim and austere in the celebration of heathen rites. His response, given with politeness and promptitude, was of an oracular character, admirably suited to the place however little to our edification: '*Ya hum logon ka dustoor hy*'—'It is one of our customs,' said the smiling priest of Brahma. After which deliverance he proceeded to invest my neck with a long white wreath of jessamine—a token of welcome strikingly at variance with our past experience of Hindoo temples. But, alas! it soon became apparent that this act did not manifest, as for a moment

it seemed to do, a more than Christian spirit of toleration and charity ; for, in another instant, the voice which had given such soft answer to our query, was raised in loud angry shouts, and the smooth bare arms that had so gently adorned me with jessamine, were clearing a passage for us through the crowd which blocked up the door of the ' holy of holies,' by means of such wicked thrusts and blows as an exasperated policeman would scarcely venture to administer in a street riot.

A single glimpse, however, of the watery cell into which we were about to be ushered, and of its unseemly crew of occupants, was enough, and we were fain to retreat, with what celerity we might, carrying along with us the conviction, that the worship of Bisheshwar might appropriately have been that of Beelzebub, so far as regarded the wild manner in which it was conducted.

Returning homeward through the city, we encountered a marriage party rendered conspicuous by three camels, on which sat some of the principals of the ceremony, glittering with gold and silver tinsel. The company were preceded by a band of musicians playing on discordant instruments, and followed by a long train of bearers, carrying on their shoulders toy figures of camels and elephants profusely ornamented with little flags. On came the cavalcade and its crowd of followers, making a great commotion, and quite filling (as it necessarily must in an Indian town) the long, narrow street—a noisy, glittering current of invasion which swept everything before it, compelling the unfortunate passenger either to 'fall in,' or to effect a speedy escape by the nearest opening.

Our next *rencontre* was one of a more delicate nature. Turning a sharp corner, we suddenly stood in the presence of a Benares

lady, who, with a sharp exclamation of mingled terror and surprise, bounded towards the wall, enveloping her face in her *saree*, in the act withdrawing a portion of that garment from the region of a smooth, sable back! She had not counted on the presence of strangers in such a place, and felt her dignity offended in the circumstance of her countenance being seen. The alternative little *exposé* was, however, accepted without any misgiving by this 'chaste Diana' of the East. In striking contrast was the conduct of a couple of Nautch girls, jingling with brass chains and glass ornaments, whom we encountered a little farther on, and who, instead of hiding their faces, proposed to entertain us then and there with a dance, leering and shuffling like true courtezans as they were.

But now came another parting of the crowd and the sound of voices chanting '*Ram, Ram, such hi!—Ram, Ram, such hi!*' This interruption, however, proved to be one of a very commonplace character. It was only the incident of a corpse being carried down to the burning ghaut. There lay the body, quite in contact with the palpitating crowd—a grim, ghastly form partially swathed in calico, and outstretched on a hand-barrow, the bearers, as they hurried it along, droning 'God is Truth.'

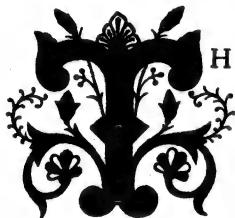
Early on the following morning our *gharry* appeared at the hotel-door as was arranged, and we set forth for Allahabad, our observation of Benares terminating in the signboards of its traders, some of which indicated that, even in this city so given to idolatry, the affairs of civilized life were not unrepresented, seeing, for example, that 'Oorioon Chunderdos' was a 'Military Tailor,' and that 'Ramchunder Singhee & Co.' owned a 'Europe shop' in the Indian Mecca.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ON THE GRAND TRUNK ROAD.

I see them on their winding way.—HEBER.

He went not with the crowd to see a shrine.—DRYDEN.



THE Grand Trunk Road between Benares and Allahabad is naturally a busy scene of traffic, and our travelling companions, who had fallen behind before reaching the former city, having rejoined us at the hotel there, our course for a time became more varied and agreeable. True, the great arid plain, with its arch of lurid sky ; the irksome change of horses—of one intractable steed for another every hour—the endless *whoa! whoa!* of the *gorri-wallah*, and the occasional blast of his bugle as we swept at full gallop through the dust, were still the unfailing features of the road. But now it had become thronged with an interesting procession ; for here, in addition to the ordinary number and variety of travellers, pious Easterns in many forms were wending their way to or from the healing precincts of Benares. Nor was this by any means a mere plebeian movement—a pedestrian excursion of the masses. It was rather a continuous cavalcade in which appeared rows of little fancy cars drawn by

ponies or oxen, with their patrician owners reposing in state, under cotton or silken awnings, and streams of horsemen, some of them astride spangled saddle-cloths, with their heads protected by voluminous folds of muslin, and bare legs dangling in jaunty freedom from stirrups. On several occasions, indeed, there were signs of a whole household being on the move. One venerable dignitary, for example, made his appearance seated along with two friends, all elegantly boxed in under a rich canopy erected on the back of a huge camel, whence he saluted us with an air of solemn dignity. Following in a large waggon drawn by four oxen, travelled the female portion of his family; this being demonstrated by such revelations as a smooth round arm, circled with gold ornaments, airing itself outside at one part of the curtain, and a pair of bright black eyes at another, flashing on us surreptitiously out of the cautiously manipulated folds.

In the course of our journey, however, we had the opportunity of observing the components of a very extensive family exodus, encamped on the field under trees and tents. The silk dresses of the male, and the gold ornaments of the female, members of the party, together with the imposing display of *gharries*, bullocks and ponies, rich, downy quilts, and bright, brazen utensils, scattered over the sward around, indicated that these were people of distinction. They might either have been emigrating to a new home, or merely bent on some excursion of a social or religious character. Meanwhile the scene of their bivouac was highly picturesque. Little fires smouldered in the embrace of assiduous cooks; women were grouped under awnings, and

children gambolled about among the detached vehicles and voraciously feeding cattle. Some of the men, seated on the ground after the fashion of the country, with knees and face almost meeting, gravely regarded us as we passed, fanning themselves with feminine assiduity, while others lay outstretched on the grass, looking with their inflated robes and great head-dresses like slumbering ogres of pantomime.

We had now begun to realize a strange result of the force of habit, by obtaining some sleep at night, notwithstanding the ceaseless discords of our rolling couch. It must be borne in mind that the day is by no means long in these regions, where the sun, although irradiating the Eastern world with a stronger beam, is much less lavish of its presence than to our own Northern summers. Thus the *dák* traveller is consigned at an early hour of the evening to such attractions as the darkness may usher in. Nor can it be said that these are ordinarily wanting. The moon, like an enchantress, transforms the whole face of nature, overspreading the brown, arid plains around with a carpet of glory, chequered with shadowy outlines of leaf and stem, and illumining the distant groves with a soft silvery light. In the moon's absence some compensation will be found in the grandeur of the stellar universe, which, with each constellation ever in its appointed place, appears to the mind pre-occupied during the short period of twilight, almost to burst into view.

But the Grand Trunk Road, connecting Calcutta with the Punjab in a direct line, and all the cities of the North-West by branches, is necessarily a busy highway throughout its wide extent. Long and winding as was our course, rural and iso-

lated as were many portions of the way, it was only at exceptional periods that we found ourselves alone. The scenery, indeed, was but little varied. Everywhere as we advanced appeared the flat, far-stretching plain of parched yellow grass, dotted with cattle, looking like specks in the distance. It was enriched with frequent woods, and coloured occasionally with blooming crops, the earlier fruits of spring cultivation, displaying the white flowers of the poppy and the blue and yellow blossoms of *dhal* and mustard beds. Earthen villages, simply enclosed *serais*, bamboo-huts, and mud-walled farms, came successively into view, and over all was the bright, blinding arch of sky, traversed by a silent, hungry multitude of kites, crows, or vultures. So numerous and voracious are these pariahs of the field, that the great gaunt skeletons of camels, or the whitened bones of horses and bullocks, which lay scattered along the route, might even yesterday have been covered with flesh and instinct with life.

It was, however, especially interesting to observe the picturesque current of humanity flow along the Grand Trunk Road, more frequently threading its way in a narrow line, but sometimes surging past in heavy volume. There were *dâk gharries* like our own, laden with *sahibs* and *mem-sahibs*, careering to what in happier circumstances might have been called the merry strains of the *gorriwallah's* horn, and bullock *hackries*, laden with goods and produce, creeping forward at a snail's pace under the stimulus of the lash. There were also native caravans (such as that to which I have alluded), with family secrets closely curtained within, and many gaudy little pony curricles, called *eckhas*, adorned with characteristic pavilions,

beneath which turban-swathed inmates found scanty shelter from the sun. The line of pedestrians was diversified at intervals with riders, whose elaborate trappings, as I have hinted, were in many cases conspicuously at variance with the neglected condition of their limbs. Parties of Afghan traders—large, brawny, and brown, with flashing black eyes, bushy black beards, and massive locks curling on Goliath-like shoulders—appeared at intervals by the way, clothed in dusty woollen garments, their heads rendered still more impervious to the effects of the sun by many folds of calico. These men were usually accompanied by rows of camels slowly wending towards the South, with shawls and fruits for the consumption of the great cities of India; or homeward, with cotton goods, drugs, and indigo, to supply the more genial regions of the North.

In this manner the famous shawls of Cashmere were wont to find their way to the principal emporiums for their sale. That trade, however, is much reduced since the period when 16,000 looms were said to be engaged in the manufacture of these fabrics.

It is a gigantic march to and fro between Calcutta and Cabool, but the performers here were in perfect keeping with the exercise. The camels, with their firm, elastic tread, seemed born to the road; while the men, not dwarfed by comparison, looked in their quaint flowing garb and broad hardy strength like some of the burly figures of patriarchal times, as represented on the canvas of the old Italian masters. Occasionally an elephant, caparisoned with more or less finery, came into view, moving through the thick dust almost with the noiseless step of a cat, its huge sides vibrating at every step, and bearing perhaps some

important personage, with or without companions, grandly enthroned on the *howdah*. Pilgrims, emigrants, hucksters, now in sparse numbers, anon in gathered masses, trudged along the bright, silent highway. Nearly every tank or pool of the many on either side was the rendezvous of some party of travellers preparing their dinner on its brink, or filling *lotas* with the liquid treasure ere they passed on their way. Family travelling parties bivouacked in the fields, collected under improvised awnings, or,



ELEPHANT WITH HOWDAH.

better still, under pleasant canopies of green boughs, which, in the absence of the 'shadow of a great rock,' are fortunately plentiful in that 'weary land,' and surrounded by snug waggons fitted up as domiciles, together with beasts of burden browsing on the plain.

In one locality we observed some of the pedestrians armed with long poles, borne over the shoulder, the better, as we were informed, to repel any beast of prey that might chance to attack

them in solitary places. Everyone, however, carried some useful or necessary appliance. The strong man of the North, journeying without camels and merchandise, as he bent his course from beyond the plains of Cashmere to Calcutta, on some mission requiring his stalwart presence alone, was literally laden with travelling gear, which always included a huge pipe, a brass cooking-pan, and notably his own couch, a comfortable-looking cotton-stuffed quilt, rolled up into a convenient form, and borne on the back.

But where, when night with its soaking dews descended, did all this weary half-clad multitude find shelter and repose? The *serais* which public contribution and private charity have established at intervals on the road, not only here but in every part of the country, amply supply the required accommodation. These domiciles are of course peculiar to the East. Where crowds of men are constantly traversing the land through field and jungle, commodious night asylums are required in places apart from the centres of population. In maintaining this important provision, the Government has been largely aided by individual generosity. Many of the best *serais*, indeed, were built and endowed by native philanthropists, and bear the names of their founders. Nor does it appear that the effects of the railway system on the primitive mode of travelling have yet extinguished either the necessity for these ancient places of repose, or the spirit of charity to which in a large measure they owe their existence; for among the ordinary intelligence of the day we find such announcements as the following, selected from a recent number of the 'Calcutta Englishman':—

BABOO BUNWARRY LALL of Chuprah has lately given another instance of his open-handed liberality to his fellow-countrymen. He has offered to the Government the sum of one lac of rupees for constructing and endowing a *serai* at Chuprah, in connection with a large tank which he has lately excavated at his own expense. The Municipal Commissioners of Chuprah are to be the trustees of the fund, and the gratuitous distribution of food to indigent travellers, at a cost of rs. 1,000 per annum, which the Baboo has already established, is to be carried out from the fund, under the superintendence of two Brahmins. The Lieutenant-Governor has accepted the proposed gift, and has publicly thanked Baboo Bunwarry Lall in the 'Gazette' for his liberality and public spirit.

Here, besides contributing a sum equal to 10,000*l.* for the purpose of 'constructing and endowing a *serai*,' the generous Baboo provides the equally peculiar and apposite gift of a large tank of water. Food also is to be supplied gratis to indigent travellers, so that in due time we may imagine poor pedestrians in the British district of Sarun stirring their limbs to reach Chuprah ere nightfall. The common *serai*, however, is a building constructed only of mud walls, and comprising a series of covered sheds and other enclosures, wherein bullocks, horses, and human beings may have rest and protection for the night. The place is under the charge of a *chokydar* placed there by the *khotwal* or village magistrate, by whose orders the gates are closed soon after sundown; so that there may be neither ingress nor egress until the beams of day streak the eastern horizon. At that glorious signal all is astir within the *serai*, and a very small fee, where even that is required, suffices to discharge the hospitality of the place, ere its incongruous party of guests emerge into the short-lived freshness of

the morning. Each wayfarer arises, takes up his bed (if he happens to carry such a luxury), and walks, with the prospect before him of wandering all day long in sunshine, than which nothing in fancy is more sweet and alluring—nothing in reality more irksome and forlorn.

Thus it is that the sluggish stream of life flows on from day to day through the great Indian plains: flows on still, no doubt, but no longer with its old strength of current, for the moving panorama of the Grand Trunk Road, which I have endeavoured so shortly to describe, has now almost finished its course of ages. The railway—that absorbing attraction where all other innovations have failed—is open the entire distance between Calcutta and Delhi, and notwithstanding the ancient stereotyped habits and hitherto intractable prejudices of the people, may be said, during the last two years, to have gathered in to itself from the fiery air and the dusty road nearly all the *dramatis personæ* of the picturesque procession of former days. A few more years, and perhaps the scene will have been played out in all parts of the country, having given place to one of those happier prospects which arise in the steps of human progress and civilization.

I will not attempt to estimate the number of a unique, homogeneous multitude of pedestrians, whom we continued to meet in straggling bands for several days during many miles of the way. That these were 'up-country' people of some peculiar tribe was evident from their strong brown physique and warm, buff-coloured clothing. Being all dressed alike, they were apparently an immense brotherly company of excursionists—only apparently, however, since the gathering represented both sexes ;

the women, as far as appearance and occupation went, being transformed for the nonce into men. Nor was the movement wanting in those popular accompaniments of a great 'turn out' — music and decorations, which were, moreover, of a simple undemonstrative kind, in pleasant harmony with the gentle-tread of many slippered feet in a soft rural highway. For each individual was not only attired but laden alike, carrying over the shoulder a pole balanced by a covered *lota*, or water-jug hung at each end, and ornamented with tiny flags and little tinkling bells, whose sweet liquid tones appropriately announced the fact that holy water was being borne through the plains. The universal burden, as we learned by enquiry through Gophall, was indeed holy water from Hurdwar (that celebrated 'Gate of the Ganges,' where the sacred river is supposed to possess prime virtue ere it begins its course through the fields of Hindostan), and thus carried from afar by a great host of bearers to sprinkle the brows of numerous sinners and the altars of many gods. We were farther informed that some of these pedestrians were bound to the Temple of Juggernaut, which, as the map will show, is quite a bewildering distance from Hurdwar.

Such an incident illustrates the strange tenacity of belief with which the people of India cling to the traditions of their country. Only a strong sentiment rooted in the universal heart could have supplied inducements sufficient to set this multitude astir on such a journey; and if we are to suppose that the completion of the railway line signalized the last grand march of these Northern water-carriers, we can only conclude that the healing properties of the Ganges at Hurdwar are being the more readily diffused throughout the land by the new mode of conveyance.

There and then, however, as it so happened, we encountered the annual stream of holy water flowing in its ancient living channel, with jubilee of flags and bells, from the foot of the northern hills to the far southern plains, and diverging from time to time in lesser rills to refresh thirsty souls in the large communities by the way. What sinner indeed would not desire to intercept a little as it meandered by, though its price were greater than the extract of roses from Ghazeepore ?

An Indian village is usually pervaded by a strong earthy savour. The evening home aspect of those we passed by the way flashed on us from little chambers of reed-work or cellars of mud, each furnishing a gloomy exhibition of shadowy figures, sitting motionless, or moving listlessly about where a sickly speck of light scarcely served to reveal the way. There was no 'sweet Auburn' giving forth the sounds of exuberant life and happiness among these dreary hamlets. Such blessings seem to be only born of a fresher and more invigorating atmosphere. Yet the eastern peasant is to some extent compensated for this deprivation by the simple range and ready gratification of his necessities. The dubious saying—regarded as a general truism—of Goldsmith's hermit, that

'Man wants but little here below'—

is literally true in the case of the Indian ryot. The favourite bread-fruit and delicious banana may be cultivated at his door; and, even where these are wanting, a small quantity of rice for food, a few yards of cloth by way of clothing, and a home which his own hands may build with materials from the adjoining field and copse, are to him those comforts of life which, except

in recurring seasons of famine, raise him above the need of charity.

The fact that beggars are nevertheless a numerous class in India, does not invalidate this statement. The whole order of *fakeers*, to begin with, are beggars from choice, cultivating a life



RUSTIC SCENE, BENGAL.

of vile indigence, together with a congenial aspect of hideous deformity, as men who would show their contempt for popular mundane advantages ; and the example, thus initiated under the sanction of 'holy orders,' naturally finds a host of followers among the idle and vagrant everywhere, in a country where almsgiving ranks among the strongest of moral obligations. A

lazy or dissolute fellow having the farther consideration before him, that the industrial system to which he belongs affords but small pay for a hard day's work, is therefore the more prone to prefer the beggar's seat under the shelter of a roadside tree, or in the cooling shadow of an urban wall. The *art* of begging, indeed, seems to be an accomplishment thoroughly adapted to the native genius. At Sherghotty, Benares, and other places on the route, we had opportunities of witnessing the several varieties of the process which not unfrequently rises to the height of an artistic performance. The prayerful folding of the hands, the worshipful cringe, the pleading eyes, and the whine of well-simulated misery, were each and all admirable in their way; and, horrible to relate, the cry of *bucksheesh ! bucksheesh !* by which they were accompanied, was sometimes enforced by a series of slaps on the region of the stomach, in elegant advocacy of its wants. That region, moreover, being wholly free from the trammel of clothing, the delicate organ referred to was, in a certain sense, capable of speaking for itself, and of course sometimes broadly contradicted the pretence of inanition !

In semi-barbarous life, where the sentiment of pity is weak, we naturally find efforts made to stimulate it by such coarse expedients as a rude ingenuity can invent. Thus I recollect witnessing in the very heart of the city of Constantinople a wretch more than emulating the condition of an Indian *fakeer*, as he sat in a public square minus an arm, but with the bony skeleton of that limb, well preserved, down to the tips of his fingers, spread out in the dust before him. Surely *that* would rouse the sensibility of the stolid crowd ! The man had in this manner converted, with advantage no doubt, a portion of his

own anatomy into his stock in trade ; but I recall the incident as a forcible illustration of the system prevailing among his brethren of the farther East. Our friends in Mirzapore informed us of an idle rascal belonging to that city, who, having obtained possession of a human skull, carried it about with him wherever he went, appealing successfully to the ghastly lesson it inculcated of a coming eternity and its awards. Another beggar there was wont to sit by the wayside, armed with a human bone in one hand and a mug of putrid water in the other, in order to illustrate the straits at which he had arrived. The charitably disposed, as he loudly beseeched them to observe his condition, could hardly refuse to rescue a parched and starving fellow-creature from the double horror of drinking poison and eating a fragment of his own kind !



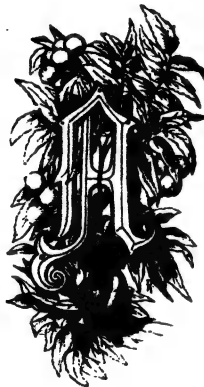
CHAPTER XXXIII.

OLD AND NEW ALLAHABAD.

Weary pilgrim, hither come.—MRS. BARBAULD.

Delusive ideas are the motives of the greatest part of mankind,
and a heated imagination the power by which their actions are incited.

MACKENZIE.



ALLAHABAD is approached by a fine road, terminating in a little wilderness of sand, over which the traveller's *gharry* is dragged by coolies. We arrived at night, and cheerless was our welcome—with the dim oil lamps of the city, which barely served to reveal its position, smouldering in front. The rude bridge of boats, too, that spanned the Jumna, creaked and pitched beneath the weight of our conveyance and its attendant coolies, as if the soft gurgling current underneath had been an agitated sea.

Passing through the streets which, as we had supposed, were lighted just enough to render their outlines visible, our ears were regaled with the melody of approaching fifes and *tom-toms*, and we presently encountered a wedding party, surrounded by servitors bearing lanterns and torches, designed at once to enliven the celebration and to show the way.

Among the numerous company thus assembled, some sat in lilliputian pony cars with bright-coloured canopies, and others rode on horseback, adorned with gold-broidered caps or other ornamental gear flashing in the glare of the flambeaux; while the main body marched in procession, bearing flags in honour of the event. The bridegroom was a child of perhaps five or six summers, sitting mute in a *dhoolie*, and decorated with a rich display of counterfeit jewels.

We could not understand by what illusion it was that so many of the good people of Allahabad appeared penned up in square cages of wicker-work, within which, by the aid of small sickly lights, they were engaged in concluding the routine of the day. On the morrow, however, we found this to have been no illusion, many of the houses consisting only of three walls of earth (with or without an inner cell), shut in by an entrance door or gate, constructed of plaited cane and reeds. Such dwellings, together with their natural accessories of squalor and dirt, constituted the normal aspect of the native city. Its immediate surroundings, too, were a series of decayed temples and black mouldering tombs, overrun with noxious *fungi* and haunted by unsightly beggars, who, as in the case of the Hunchback of Notre Dame, looked 'like the natural product of the place.'

No wonder then, that, notwithstanding the famous sanctity of Allahabad, the priesthood should apparently have a poor calling within its precincts, except during the short periods of its great recurring festivals. The numerous temples seemed to be in a crumbling, neglected condition. Through the open door of one, as we passed down the street, we observed a single tenant stretched out, in the attitude of a country bumpkin asleep in a

field. In another, notwithstanding the attractions of a ragged flag, which floated invitingly from the roof, the only sign of life visible was a hideous human figure crouched in a corner, and indulging at the moment in a weary yawn beneath the effigy of a god, whose round protruding eyes ludicrously suggested the fancy of their being dilated with astonishment at the effrontery of the act!

Nevertheless it remains to be told, that natural beauty and fertility are things pertaining to Allahabad. The dwellings of the English inhabitants, civil and military, are very handsome villas, with fine gardens and compounds, situated at some distance from the old town, amidst magnificent roads intersected by umbrageous avenues. The province itself, moreover, notwithstanding the desolate character of its capital, is one of the richest in Hindostan, abounding in cotton, sugar, indigo, and other staple products of the soil.

The world has been sufficiently informed that Allahabad is a small ancient city, built on a triangle, where the Ganges and Jumna mingle their floods, and that its chief, almost only, attraction is a noble fort constructed of red stone—a place of great strength, having high ramparts with turf parapets, and a fine green glacia, besides being provided with 30 pieces of cannon and arms for 30,000 men. The Jumna Musjid, or Great Mosque, is a plain spacious building, wherein the Faithful were wont to pray and the Infidel has ventured to dance, the interior having lately served the excellent purpose of an assembly room.

Apart from these erections, there is nothing in Allahabad to strike the eye but a large quadrangle with four rich Gothic gateways, called the Serai of Khusru, which is chiefly interesting

as an elegant abode of poverty, being surrounded by a series of chambers in which indigent travellers are, through a benevolent provision of the founder, lodged free of expense.

The rapid series of vicissitudes undergone by Allahabad during the half-century before it fell into the hands of the East India Company, form a sufficient explanation of its present ruinous condition; but if the Emperor Akbar could view it from his tomb, sad to him, no doubt, would be the spectacle now presented by the city, whose foundations he had laid in a spirit of vainglorious emulation, and in which he himself delighted to dwell. Allahabad is, however, again rising in the world, and now with the prospect of a more vital and enduring existence. A foretaste of that prosperity it already enjoys. Ruins are being cleared away and handsome buildings erected for purposes more honest and profitable than the ministry of superstition or the glorification of kings. The railway is now nearly completed, which will form a through line of communication with Bombay, and render Allahabad, as the chief point of railway communication between the Bombay seaboard and the North-West Provinces, a great nucleus of goods transit and rendezvous of travellers to Upper India. It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of this position. There can be no doubt that Calcutta will require to part with its large passenger traffic. Bombay and Galle being nearly equidistant from Europe, the saving of time, even to Calcutta passengers going round by Bombay, may be roughly estimated at about a week, and the other important consideration of expense does not seem likely to go against the railway. Then, too, it would appear that the extensive trade in imported piece goods and

other light articles for the consumption of the North-West, hitherto passing through Calcutta, will fall to be conducted by way of Bombay and Allahabad. This latter prospect alone is no doubt a serious consideration for the Indian capital, but happily the work of construction and reclamation now in progress has combined with the railway system to afford Calcutta countervailing advantages. Still the time has arrived when all whom it may concern should look to the miserably inadequate condition of the harbour of that city, as well as to the tedious and expensive navigation of the Hooghly, its only existing way of access from without.

The fort and castle of Allahabad, as represented pictorially, may afford the notion of a delightful place of residence in a pleasant neighbourhood. In reality, however, this imposing pile is erected on the border of a dreary plain, and our garrison soldiers within its walls have no choice between the exhilarating view thus presented and the sullen roll of waters on the other side, varied only by the occasional appearance of a cotton-laden raft or nondescript country-boat floating past, with, perhaps, the aid of a tattered square sail. The other dwellings adorning the adjoining banks of the river are chiefly huts, formed somewhat in the fashion of coarse basket-work, where goats and donkeys, dwelling in social concord with their owners, stroll out and in with a placid air of unconcern, or with great ears erect, stand in the family doorway observant of the surrounding landscape.

But the rickety material condition of Allahabad does not weaken its moral influence on the Hindoo mind. Infinitely more important than all architectural fancies is the consideration that here occurs the confluence of three sacred rivers—the Ganges,

the Jumna, and the Sereswati ; nor does it matter that the last of these, so far as human observation goes, meanders only through the written records of Brahminical faith, being, as the priesthood allege, hidden from the outward eye beneath the sands of Sirkind. The properties of each stream are thus held to be commingled in one potential flood, of which the healing power must, on first principles of reason and all hydraulic laws, be trebly efficacious. Hence the attractions of the *Mag Mela*, or great fair, for which Allahabad is celebrated throughout Hindostan. On the return journey we obtained a glimpse of this yearly concourse of pilgrims as they flocked to the scene of immersion. An immense heterogeneous multitude of people, intermingled with the elephants, horses, camels, bullocks, *hackries*, and *echkas*, which had been the means of conveying them thither, in many cases from a great distance, crowded the banks where the two rivers join. Unfortunately, however, for us, bathing operations had not commenced. That the host of visitors was yet incomplete, we soon found to our cost, the way as we proceeded being almost blocked up with the stream of fresh comers. Near the bridge of boats we encountered an indescribable jumble of man and beast, together with vehicles of all kinds, amid which wealth and poverty were represented in every degree of pomp and humility. At the other end of the bridge, confronting the advancing crowd, four or five unclad figures were visible in the focus of tumult and confusion, swaying from side to side of a raised platform (where they appeared to have climbed for refuge), while the infuriated mob never ceased thrusting clenched hands in their faces with a universal but seemingly harmless attitude of menace. These men, as we afterwards learned, were

officials in the act of receiving a toll, which was levied for the passage of animals across the bridge, the pass-ticket being a chalk mark impressed by them on the owner's hand held up for that purpose! The prevailing disorder and excitement, together with the eager impatience of the tax-payers, had served to complete our delusion. Failing the explanation which thus so completely changed the complexion of this incident, we might have remained to this day under the impression that we had left these poor creatures struggling for their lives with the furious pilgrims of the *Mag Mela*.



NATIVE BARBER.

We heard afterwards that the bathing spectacle at the confluence of the sacred rivers did not on that occasion attain to its usual magnitude, and for the seemingly inexplicable reason that the *Naees*, or native barbers, had put a serious obstacle in the way! It will appear, however, that the *Nae* is an important functionary of the *Mela*, when it is considered that the multitudinous heads of these pilgrim bathers must needs be shaved before the act of ablution, in order to render it efficacious.

The Hindoo scriptures, indeed, inculcate the belief that for every hair of the worshipper's body thus committed to the river he will be awarded a million years of heaven. No wonder then that the *Naes*, availing themselves of what they conceived to be a suitable occasion, should have combined to increase their charge from one to three annas ($1\frac{1}{2}d.$ to $4\frac{1}{2}d.$ sterling) per head, a fee which, as it turned out, a considerable portion of the multitude could not, or would not, pay. The acute barbers had, in fact, obstinately 'struck work' at the critical moment when their services were supposed to be of infinite value to an immense assembly of their countrymen, alleging as a reason that the exorbitant amount at which the Government assessor had taxed their incomes now rendered it impossible for them to work at the old rate.

That some were present, however, to whom the barbers' fee could be no serious obstacle, we gather from a statement which appeared in the newspapers of the day regarding this meeting, to the effect that many of the pilgrims had volunteered to pay the local authorities large sums of money for admission to a cavern, which is supposed to lead from below the fort to Benares, as well as to other holy cities in India, and is generally believed to have existed in Allahabad since the date of its construction by Akbar. The fact that a closed passage does appear in the place ascribed to this *via sancta* scarcely serves to account for such extraordinary credulity, which, it is almost unnecessary to add, is the national characteristic that priests, *pandahs*, and the entire host of harpies who attend to regulate the proceedings of Indian *melas* are accustomed to turn to account.

Nor has this normal tendency to delusion yet yielded to the

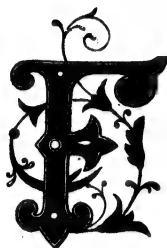
influences of European civilization. The pilgrim multitudes of India are still ever on the march—to such holy cities as Benares, Pokur, Muttra, and Gya—to such sanctifying *melas* as those of Allahabad, Baroonee, Serampore, and Hurdwar. At the last and most important place, where, as has been stated, the Ganges first begins to flow towards the plains, the gathering of 1867 is reported to have reached the extraordinary number of 2,000,000 of persons, by which, however, I presume we are to understand all who came and went during the several days of the festival, and not those who were present at any one time.

But, unfortunately, these hallowed scenes of rendezvous for the pious possess features altogether at variance with the cleansing flood and the open air. Within the very walls of the fort of Allahabad there is a subterranean chamber, about eight to ten feet high and thirty to forty feet long, which, at all times a popular place of resort, is literally crowded with visitors during the *Mela*. This cavern is entered by a narrow doorway, at which a native warder stands to receive a charitable offering from all who enter. It is very dimly lit by a few oil lamps, the rancid smell of which serves to aggravate the nauseous gloom of the place, and is literally crammed with uncouth images of deities, individually named, and distinguished for peculiar imputed attributes. So rude, indeed, are some of these objects of worship, that they do not exhibit even the outline of an effigy—one of them being merely the *stump of a tree bound at the ends with an iron band*.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE INCIDENTS OF THE WAY.

Anything may become nature to man ; the rare thing is to find a nature that is truly natural.—*Anon.*



FROM this point the railway was open as far as Shekoabad, a distance of 264 miles. Cawnpore lies between, and in a few hours we slid into the shadow of its handsome and commodious station. Here a mixed crowd of ticket-holders, who, after being locked in a waiting-room pending the arrival of the train, had been just set loose, were streaming over the platform in great excitement. Threading the maze of moving forms walked the inevitable railway *chokydar*, glorious with spruce official cap and bright belted uniform, and remarkably active with the little cane which he was privileged to carry. It was thus only natural that shouting, and rushing, and knuckle rapping should be going on as we arrived at Cawnpore. The platform seemed familiar ground ; nor less familiar the brass-mounted locomotive, emitting its wonted hiss, and driven by an English engineer. Yet there were features in the scene truly oriental, for the place, heavily roofed to shut out the sun, looked like some great twilight tunnel beneath a field of vivid light ; and the engine, as it moved with a shriek from this

grateful shelter, sped away with its burden, not through fresh green valleys and across flowing rivers, but through a hot glowing landscape, in which tracts of jungle alternated with dry water-courses and parched brown plains.

On this day, however, it so happened that the heavens were propitious, and we witnessed what had become even to us a delightful novelty. A more agreeable temperature seemed suddenly to pervade the air; the strong light had waned sensibly; and looking forth from the carriage window, we perceived a sky over which dark clouds were diffusing the folds in which they had already shrouded the sun. A few minutes more and down on the thirsty soil fell the precious rain torrent with a fine, plashing music—Nature's prelude to man's harvest hymn.

But this unlooked-for deluge in such a place was in another sense destructive, sweeping unsuspecting pilgrims and pedestrians from the highway into every possible place of protection, and making soaking havoc of the loose, bright colours and tinsel decorations of the eastern wardrobe. In a very short time the fields on either hand were streaked with watery trenches, while groups of travellers might be seen crouching under hastily constructed awnings. The transformation was as complete as that upon a mimic stage; for, indeed, the spectacle of improvised tents erected beside the flood, with draggled, half-clad figures cowering for shelter within them, was more suggestive of a shipwreck than an incident of the scorching plain.

It will, of course, be understood that I have hitherto spoken of the phenomenon of rain in the sense of its natural and ordinary occurrence. One of the disasters incidental to such a

climate is an occasional downfall so much out of season, and to such an extent, as seriously to injure the growing crops.

The sun had set when we reached Shekoabad—a place which revealed itself in the semi-darkness as a dreary mound of sand surrounded by a few houses in which feeble lights glimmered. My friend had rightly calculated that our *gharries*, with the advantage they afforded of progressing the while, would be preferable as sleeping quarters to the nocturnal attractions of Shekoabad. Other conveyances besides our own awaited unhappy travellers on the sand, and great was the noise and confusion as, aided by ghastly lanterns, the process advanced of packing ladies and gentlemen, together with other bulky objects, into seemingly impossible spaces.

On the following morning, when, at the earliest streak of dawn, the Rev. Doctor and I met once more, loose-robed and slipshod, to prosecute our wonted walk, we exchanged congratulations on the prospect of reaching Delhi on the following day. The events of the last few days, as we looked back upon them, assumed a strangely prolonged aspect. Already it seemed as if we were old friends, and had been travelling together for a considerable period. Now that we were so soon to part, I could not but reflect with gratitude on the Doctor's ever-welcoming smile, so much brighter than the cold grey twilight as we met at daybreak—of his guidance and advice both so freely extended, and of his pleasant anecdotes recounted with high spirit and humour amidst all the discomforts of the journey. Some of these had reference to the Mutiny, in which I knew (although not from himself) that he had acted a distinguished part, even to the saving of others' lives at the imminent risk of his own.

The ladies also had striven to cheer one another throughout the irksome trials of the hot dusty way. It was their wont to appear at our daily reunions, which took place either within the sheltering verandah of the *dâk* bungalow, that had afforded them the means of making some show of a toilette, or under the emerald canopy of a roadside tree, in a totally helpless and most exquisite condition of *deshabille*, there to preside over an ancient tea kettle flanked by a tin case of many divisions filled with the common store. Even the baby, so far from exerting itself as babies in general do, to spoil the harmony of the meeting, proved an additional element of concord, its plump little face radiating smiles from within the soft white and blue bundle which constituted the remainder of its visible personality.

Two incidents of the road may serve to illustrate the nature of those vagaries which puzzle some observers in estimating the ethical constitution of the man whom Bishop Heber denominated the 'mild Hindoo.'

My friend, whose thorough knowledge of the native tongue sometimes afforded him the opportunity of becoming acquainted with language not spoken for his enlightenment, one day overheard his *gorriwallah* address a freshly harnessed horse, which objected to move away, in the following words, uttered in a soft persuasive tone :

'My son, be a good horse! Go on, my son; why should you be so disobedient? You are not a horse that costs nothing; you are a horse that eats five seers of grain every day! Remember, you are carrying the sahib, and the mem-sahib, and the baby-sahib. Get along, my son, and be a good horse!'

Now the inexplicable absurdity of this parental address lay,

not so much in itself, as in the fact that it was spoken by way of prelude to a series of most cruel strokes which instantly followed its utterance. An iron-bound staff in a pitiless hand prolonged, with scarcely the intervention of a pause, the argument thus initiated by a gentle voice and soothing words of counsel!

Of a similar idiosyncrasy to this Bengal groom was, we may suppose, the Madras keeper who, according to a local journal, when taxed by his mistress with stealing the food of an elephant which had been placed under his charge, replied with a look of injured innocence, 'Madam, can you imagine I would rob my child?'

Again, one morning before sunrise we overtook a *gharry*, from the window of which a young English traveller urged his driver forward, an order which was echoed by his native servant on the roof, but in an undertone of provoking quietness. The *gorriwallah* however, manifestly, paid not the slightest heed to the injunction, whether because he was deaf in reality, or because he did not choose to hear, who could tell? But *we* heard the victim of this genuine or feigned infirmity, after he had been left some distance behind, shouting his reiterated command, 'Go along, you brute; *go* along, you brute!' the uncomplimentary substantive being rendered with a rich tremulous emphasis that betokened the last extremity of passion.

Presently, however, the *gharry* came up, and left us behind in turn. That it was finally driven at a reckless pace became evident when we had advanced a short distance, and found its recent occupant standing, or rather stamping, in the dust beside the wreck of the vehicle itself, which the *gorriwallah*, through some mishap, had capsized just before we approached. The indignation of the unhappy youth, thus cast away where neither

help nor shelter could be obtained, was doubtless all the more intense that the faces of his companions manifested not a spark of sympathy with the excitement depicted on his own. Beside him stood his servant, but both *syce* and *gorriwallah* had considerably established the breadth of the fallen *gharry* between him and them. 'Now, you old brute,' cried the enraged Englishman, with a menacing gesture towards the *gorriwallah*, 'do you see what you have done?' Evidently that functionary saw what he had done, for he stood contemplating his work with gently folded hands and a meek look of resignation; but he spoke not in reply, precisely as if he did not understand the language in which he had been addressed. 'Tell him,' exclaimed the exasperated traveller, turning to his native servant as interpreter, 'tell him that he's a brute!' The man so instructed calmly faced the delinquent and told him in Hindostanee literally how he stood in the *sahib's* estimation; whereupon the *gorriwallah*, bending towards his traducer with a *salaam*, delivered his response, which, being interpreted through the same listless medium, proved to be an expression of profound regret for the accident, coupled with an acknowledgment in general terms of the *sahib's* well-known character for intelligence and perspicacity!

This catastrophe, it may be proper to add, turned out less serious than might have been supposed, for the *gharry*, when raised and bound up with a rope, was found to be competent, after a fashion, to complete the stage; and the emaciated little horse, which had meanwhile been cropping the grass and swinging its tail with an evident sense of relief, was being captured by its tormentor as we pursued our way.

During our progress northward a change in things animate and inanimate had been growing gradually more manifest. The sun was now frequently obscured by clouds, the nights had turned chilly, and in the early morning thin layers of ice crunched beneath the wheels of our vehicle and under the sandalled feet of the few shivering pedestrians who had gone forth on their march earlier than the sun. Nor was the face of nature more altered than that of man himself. The strong brown figures of up-country people were now in excess of the thin tawny forms of the farther south; the very cattle in the fields looked comparatively large and strong. Earth and air teemed with more abundant forms of life. Flocks of white 'paddy' birds stood on high legs among the pools or beside the tanks on either hand; kites and crows in increased numbers hovered overhead; and flights of green paroquets, their hues sparkling in the sunshine, screamed across our path. Many lovely *ghughhs* (a small species of ringdove) were likewise visible by the way; while lithe little squirrels gambolled about the roots of the fine trees, which for miles together gave our course the appearance of a rich green alley.



CHAPTER XXXV.

DELHI, PAST AND PRESENT.

For heaven's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of kings.—*King Richard II.*

Whose game was empires, and whose stakes were thrones.—BYRON.

And sleep in dull cold marble.—*King Henry VIII.*

Yet ere one bolt from home has struck the foe,
Far Delhi crumbles under English guns.—HEDDERWICK.



T was in a peculiar light that we first saw Delhi. Looking forth from my crib early on the morning of our approach, I found the sky still bright with stars, and the earth obscured by a dense ground mist, vocal with a chorus of invisible jackals. The air was extremely cold, and the crackling of ice beneath the carriage wheels served to complete the wintry features of a scene which we had never associated in imagination with the neighbourhood of the Mogul capital. As the morning advanced the low-lying fog expanded until it pervaded the air, and when immediately afterwards the sun rose, kindling it by degrees into a strong luminous haze, there, a short distance in advance, towering in this glowing medium, stood the domes and cupolas of Delhi, with the spires of the Jumna Musjid forming the centre of attraction.

The enchantment, however, thus compounded of shade and sunshine, was soon dissolved; for the atmospheric glory gradually disappeared as, through a waste of sand channelled by many narrow winding streams, we approached the Jumna and its dilapidated bridge of boats. On stone steps, leading from very diminutive dwellings to the river's brink, washermen and washerwomen, jocosely conversing, busily plied their trade. The barren earth around gave no sign of productiveness, and only served to sustain some huts of cane and reed-work—the homes of a poor but apparently industrious class of natives.

On the opposite bank, and guarded by its stately Fort or palace, stood the city—a characteristic mass of flat-roofed structures, interspersed with trees and columns. But chiefly conspicuous was the Fort itself, surrounded with embattled walls of red granite about forty feet high, and enclosing within its limits an elaborate display of Gothic and other architecture.

Although, as we have seen, so difficult of approach only a few years ago, Delhi may at the present day be reached comfortably enough by rail from Calcutta in the short interval between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning. It is now not only a rendezvous of tourists but the theme of a guidebook. To such a *vade mecum*, therefore, I must refer for descriptive details, should they be deemed wanting in this narrative. But, indeed, beyond the few grander features which photography has already made familiar to the world, there is little even in Delhi to engage the eye. To the picture which these collectively present, add the usual range of streets bustling with an eastern crowd, and the rest is a scene of desolation and decay. It was only after we had passed within the great gateway that we realized the ex-

ment of this devastation. Time and the hand of violence had combined to smite the imperial city with a twofold destruction. The earthen mounds and deserted ruins that lay scattered about, the battered aspect of the town walls as well as those of the magazine, and even that of the iron cupola which surmounted the handsome English church with its white marble cross in front, commemorating the massacre of 1857, all gave evidence of the terribly destructive force of the besieging artillery.

The principal thoroughfare, known as the *Chandnee Chowk*, or Street of Light, to which reference is made in every account of Delhi, was certainly the finest purely Indian street we had yet seen. It struck us as resembling, after an Eastern fashion, the Unter den Linden of Berlin, there being trees in the centre and a road for traffic on either side. An occasional native family carriage moved ostentatiously among the throng of pony carts and bullock *hackries* that filled the way, and the picturesque robes of Indian aristocracy shone at intervals among the scanty garments of the masses.

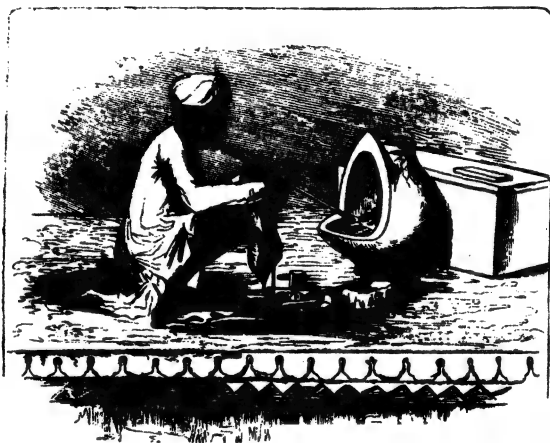
The architectural features of the *Chandnee Chowk* were of the minute ornate style, the buildings being usually small in size, and provided with terraces and balconies. Some of these domiciles still exhibited the traces of that fine gilding where-with they had glittered for the gratification of more lordly tenants in the light of other days. Many were yet laden with sculptured ornaments which time had failed to destroy; and it was evident that the popular taste for such decorations had not departed with the means of procuring them, as numerous painted symbols and figures, chiefly of a religious character, illuminated the walls and doorways. Depicted thus in many

parts appeared that sacred and universally esteemed bird the peacock, generally with full spread tail and in an attitude of intelligent observation. There were also elephants, some of which stood on nothing and others on terrestrial spheres that afforded them scanty accommodation. In one place a large brown figure of the Devil was pourtrayed terrifying a houseful of unbelievers (Christians, perhaps) out of their wits; and elsewhere were representations of Bramah sitting cross-legged on a lotus leaf, or ascending to heaven with uplifted arms. It is to be observed, however, that these various devices possessed a greater significance than that pertaining to children's toys, being designed for the double purpose of pictures to charm the eye and talismans to guard the soul.

Now as the *Chandnee Chowk* may be styled the Regent Street of North-Western India, its little shops were, as a matter of course, gay with the artistic products, and alive with the manufacturing industry of the district. The array of tinsel and fancy ornaments, including such things as beads and bangles, gold and silver lace, flashy head-dresses and glittering marriage boxes, not only outshone but far outnumbered the products of sober usefulness, being to that extent in higher favour and better demand. Strangely enough the jewellery quarter, to which orders still flow from the Western world, was altogether wanting in display. On the following morning, however, at the earliest streak of dawn, the explanation of this seeming anomaly appeared at the door of our *dāk* bungalow in the persons of sundry competitive jewellers and other craftsmen, carrying in their packs a very beautiful variety of filagree ornaments in gold or silver, and handsomely wrought gold studs,

links, and breast pins, together with ivory paintings, inimitably minute in design and brilliant in colouring. It thus appeared that in Delhi these valuable articles partook more of the nature of floating capital than of window ornaments.

It is a slight matter that the appearance of these itinerant goldsmiths should have been curiously at variance with the attractive quality of their wares, but I regret to add that, in some cases at least, quite an equal disparity prevailed



WORKING JEWELLER, DELHI.

between the prices they demanded and those they were willing to accept.

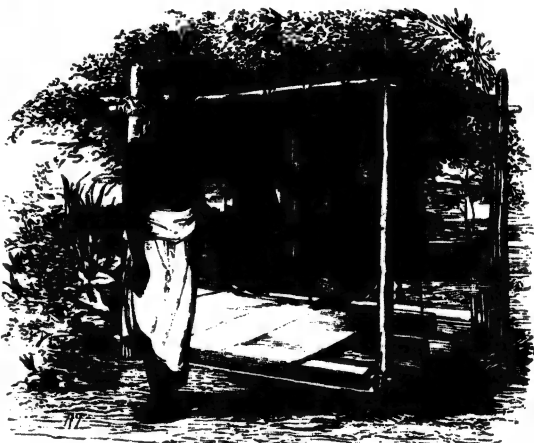
Of course the *Chandnee Chowk* was the centre of a labyrinth of busy thoroughfares, among which we traversed the *Kooncha Nachubunda*, the *Ashurfee Kutra*, the *Billee Mghra*, and other streets, the better to observe the routine of business life in Delhi. The various orders of tradesmen—pipe-makers, men-milliners,

toy-manufacturers, and the rest, usually seated in tailor fashion, were at work in their respective shops, many of them in the precise position of huge window figures. Even dyers and calico printers plied their trade within these narrow recesses, one end of the room constituting the dye-work, and the other the print-shop. The work of the former, as I have previously indicated, is effected by dipping the cloth in pots of clay or brass containing a supply of the requisite liquors; that of the latter is accomplished through the instrumentality of tiny wooden blocks, on which the patterns are cut, the printing table being a board sustained on the crossed legs of the operator! In this way the dyers and calico printers of India impart dyed colours and designs, in accordance with the native taste, to goods both of native and foreign make—to the *tanta's* cloth and to Manchester shirtings. They are also accustomed to print their own patterns on British dyed fabrics, making use of an acid to extract the colour in styles where that process is necessary to produce the required effect.

Thus, while revolving in wide, lofty chambers, the swift cylinder machines of Manchester and Glasgow are turning off each one 600 yards of cloth (more or less) per hour, the manufacturing industry of India jogs slowly along in little holes and corners, after its own primitive plan; both classes of production competing with one another, and finding customers in the bazaar. It is yet, to some extent at least, a question of machinery and capital *versus* manual labour with a diet of rice and *chupatties*.

Not very long ago, the late Colonel Baird Smith estimated that about two-thirds of the population of India were clothed

with indigenous cotton manufactures. Such a calculation was then only conjectural, nor could it be rendered with much greater accuracy now. We can only conclude, as a matter of general observation, that the native fabrics are slowly but surely giving place to the products of British industry. Meanwhile, the *tanta*, or weaver, not being yet a traditionary character, may be seen even by the roadside in the Mofussil, dawdling



WEAVER AND WINDER OF THREAD.

over his task in company with a fellow-labourer or two; their apparatus being simply a bamboo framework set up within the copse, which partly conceals them from observation. Or he may be found alone, seated in a hole dug under a tree, which he has selected as affording the twofold convenience of a shelter for himself from the sun, and a projecting branch on which his web may hang. From such sylvan workshops it is easy for the *tanta* to betake himself homewards as often as the spirit moves

him, or fatigue renders irksome the dreary process by which his material attains to the condition of cotton cloth.

These, however, may now be regarded as closing scenes among the industrial occupations of India. The mere observation of a task so slow and thriftless scarcely leaves room to doubt, that, even in such a country, human hands and heads must eventually find more profitable employment. Another, although

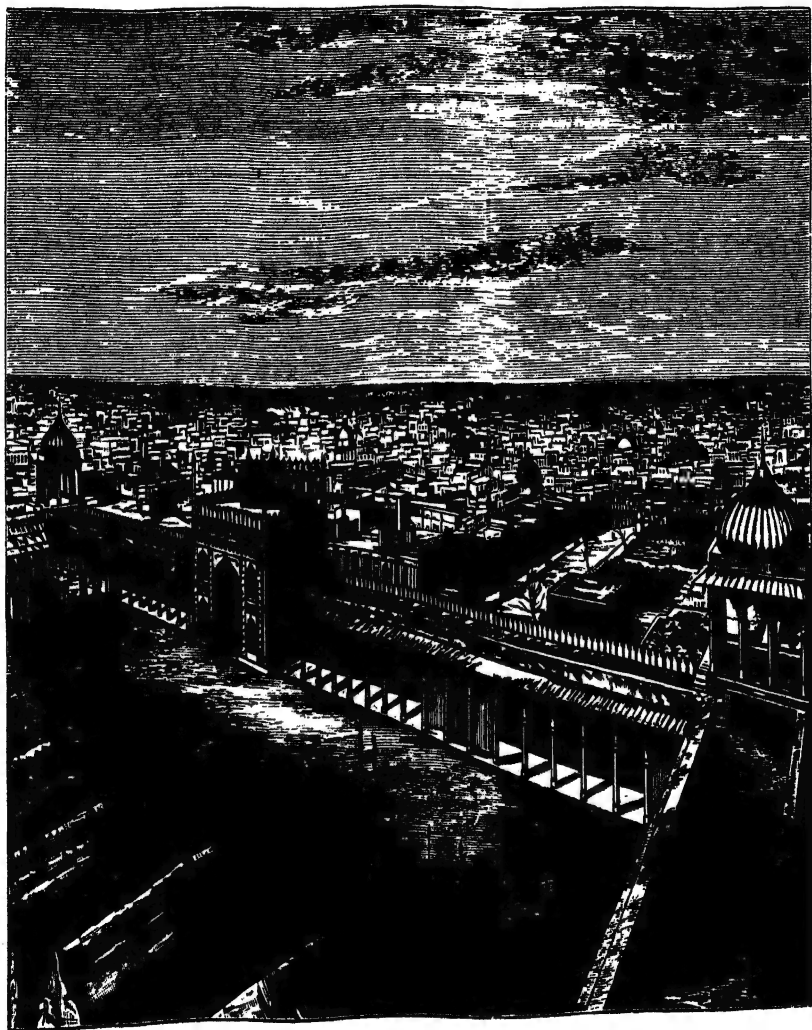


JUMNA MUSJID, DELHI.

of course less weighty, reason than economy of manufacture for the gradual extinction of these crude operations of the past exists in the superior construction of the textile fabrics produced by British mechanical art. This advantage the native himself has not failed to appreciate. The single fact, as indicated by the statistics of trade, that the imports into India of British cotton manufactures may be roughly estimated as having increased

one-third in quantity in the last ten or twelve years, shows clearly (making every reasonable allowance for the progressive wants of the people) the direction in which the consumption is advancing.

The Jumna Musjid is entered by three broad flights of steps, each leading through a magnificent gateway to an immense terrace with a reservoir of white marble in the centre. At the west end, and occupying the whole breadth of the platform, stands the Mosque—a striking edifice, consisting outwardly of a mixed stone and marble frontage, surmounted by three marble domes and flanked by two minarets of great height; and inwardly of a high vaulted white marble hall, where, squatted on the smooth hard flags, we found a few solitary worshippers, each with face towards the *Kibla*, see-sawing through their usual course of devotions. On certain festival occasions, however, the vast terrace itself is literally crowded with an earnest multitude of the faithful. Standing on that gorgeous architectural elevation, with its elaborated piazzas of red granite, richly-carved marble pavilions, and noble spires towering aloft in the sunlight, the visitor is overwhelmed with the contrast it presents to the confined dingy mass of buildings, some of them mere huts and hovels, which occupy the barren soil below—so great, it seems, in the midst of littleness, so fresh in a scene of ruin, so isolated in the centre of a throng. Yet, to our apprehension, this halloved resort of Moslem piety was by no means a grateful retreat from the bustle of life. For a temple of that order has nothing in common with our notions of a sanctuary. The sombre, void interior of the mosque is calculated to oppress the mind rather than to touch the heart; and it may safely be concluded that the spirit of devotion is not stimulated by the large marble



DELHI, FROM THE OUTER COURT OF THE JUMMA MUSJID.

pavement, so beautiful and so hard, on which the act of worship is performed. The spacious terrace, open to the sky, was doubtless a very paradise of sculptural beauty; but it possessed no soothing features of shade or softness—wall and pillar seemed to blaze with excess of heat and light.

From such a fiery, stone platform, with all its splendours, the spirit of devotion might well turn for relief even to the green carpet of nature, where,

‘‘Neath cloistered boughs, each floral bell that swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the balmy air,
Makes Sabbaths in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer.’

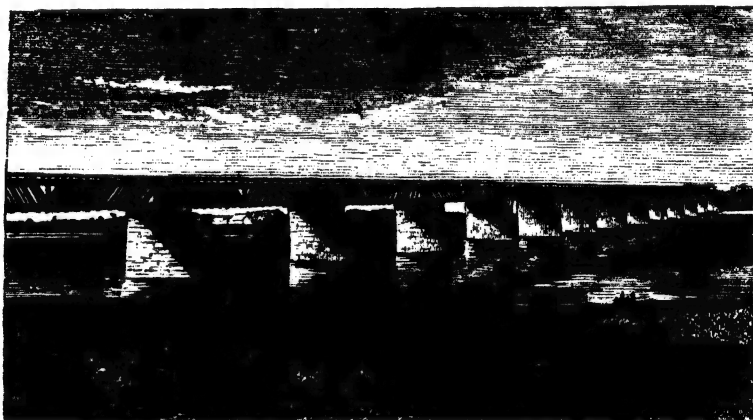
There are said to be forty other mosques in Delhi.

It is here necessary to state that, since the period of which I speak, the city has been, to some extent, redeemed from its ruinous condition. Much of the rubbish has been cleared away, and the work of removal is still in progress. Two good railway stations and a telegraph office, a new post-office, and a handsome *serai* for the accommodation of travellers, have served at once to enlarge the appearance of the city, and to improve the ruin-stricken way; while, instead of the tremulous old bridge of boats, the Jumna is now spanned by such a railway viaduct as would have excited the wonder and envy of Akbar himself.

A visit to the palace of the Moguls strikingly illustrates the historical fact, that it was designed for something more than a place of residence in the ordinary sense. It was in truth an *imperium in imperio*, wherein, defended by immense turreted walls, and surrounded by quite an extensive circle of

dependent followers and fawning parasites, His Majesty abode, equally secure from outward aggression and internal revolt.

In the shadow of the great gateway we perceived a curious erection covered with green cloth, on which lay a slip of mari-gold. This was a Mahommedan tomb enclosed by a low wall, and having at one end a block of stone perforated with square holes, in which lights were burned during the night. The



RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER THE JUMNA.

green cloth was emblematical of the popular inscription, 'Here lies one who was a Synd, or descendant of the Prophet,' and had been laid there along with the golden flower, because that was a sacred day in the Mahommedan calendar. We might not have paused to notice this humble memorial beneath the castle walls, but that it appeared in a strange place, and was manifestly tended by some one in Delhi who believed in the eternity of human love. Passing within the gateway we

encountered a terrible spectacle of destruction, on which however, as it has often been described, there is no need for me to dwell. Whole streets, formed of empty stables and deserted dwellings, bore testimony to the strife that had raged in this city of fallen royalty. The famous *peepul* tree, under which, during the Mutiny, twenty-seven men, women, and children were massacred, still occupied its old corner, bending among the debris with deeply furrowed trunk and drooping dusty branches, as if it too had been smitten with the prevailing desolation of the place. Her Majesty's 82nd Regiment and a party of artillery were in possession of the Fort, but they were then at mess in the barracks at the other end. The *Aum Khas*, or courtyard, where the imposing retinues of successive rulers were wont to muster, was a scene of devastation ; not so, however, the *Dewan Khas*, or hall of audience, where once shone that wonderful peacock throne of Delhian history, whose gems, bright with all the hues of the rainbow, manifested to all comers the peerless grandeur of him who, from its royal dais, heard appeals and dispensed justice. The building was still a chaste pavilion of white marble, sustained on pillars of the same material enriched with mosaic patterns. Within, however, we found this Paradise Lost of the Moguls nothing more than a rather low-roofed hall embellished with rich but now tawdry gilding, and, in lieu of the peacock throne, appeared a series of glass cases containing a characteristic *mélange* of objects—scarlet coats and painted toys, gold and silver trimmings, brazen gods, wicker baskets, and many other articles tempting to the native eye laid out for inspection and approval. When grandeur and extravagance have run their course, thrift and industry must be called in to repair the

waste; and so the renowned Hall of Audience had been converted into a museum of articles suitable to the wants of the country, then and there displayed for sale.

Delhi has long been a celebrated emporium for Cashmere shawls, although the peculiar advantage it naturally possessed, in ante-railway days, for the prosecution of that trade exists no longer. Such fabrics, however, still continue to be woven there,



RUINS OF OLD DELHI.

some of them gorgeously inwrought with gold and silver tissue for the due maintenance of native rank and state.

So far I have been speaking of the modern city of Delhi, which, built on a rocky eminence by the Emperor Shah Jehan, about 200 years ago, is represented as being seven miles in circuit, and now containing a population of about 150,000, nearly equally divided between Mahommedans and Hindoos. Outside

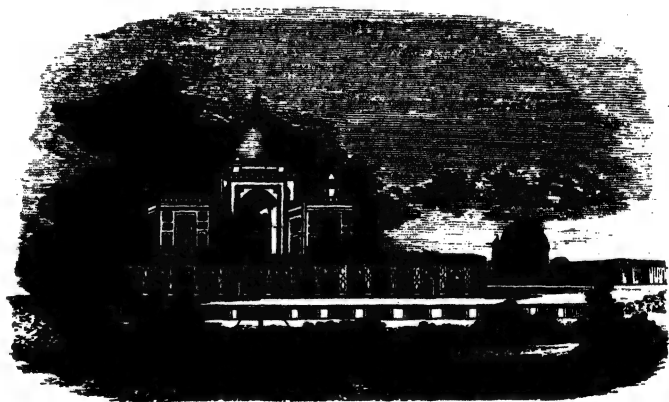
the walls lie the ruins of 'old Delhi,' comprising several former cities, and occupying a circumference of about twenty miles.

Passing out by the now historical Cashmere Gate, where the battered and broken masonry showed how terrible had been the assault of our troops, we proceeded first to a rising ground about a mile to the right, sprinkled with dark waste mounds of granite, among which glistened little white tombstones and crosses marking the graves of our fallen soldiers. The disadvantage under which the brave defenders of India had fought in a place so unsuitable for the action of cavalry was clearly apparent; nor did we see the worst, for the brushwood had been removed, under cover of which the Sepoys had harassed their action and shot them down.

We were now provided with the almost forgotten luxury of a carriage and pair, driven, too, not by a morose Hindoo *gorri-wallah* but by a spruce English jockey—a waif who, in beating about the sea of life, had somehow drifted as far away from home as the upper banks of the Jumna. Under his guidance we traversed a region where it seemed as if the earth had withered under the blighting incubus of the ruins it sustained. Mausoleums and temples, mosques, palaces, and columns in every stage of decay, from still handsome marble halls down to blackened heaps of stones, lay scattered over ten miles of a soil chiefly composed of rock and sand, except where, in an occasional green spot, some miserable crop feebly essayed to struggle into the light, and deepened, if that were possible, the melancholy aspect of the scene.

On that day, however, there happened to be a stir of life among the tombs. Close to the city walls appeared the en-

campment of the Begum of Bhopaul on her return from Agra, whither she had gone to be invested with the new order of the Star of India, in recognition of her loyal attachment to British rule during the Mutiny. The discreet and popular Begum, whose death, which occurred within the last two years, elicited from the British Government an expression of 'profound regret,' may or may not have taken her whole staff of state along with her on that occasion; but there must have been several

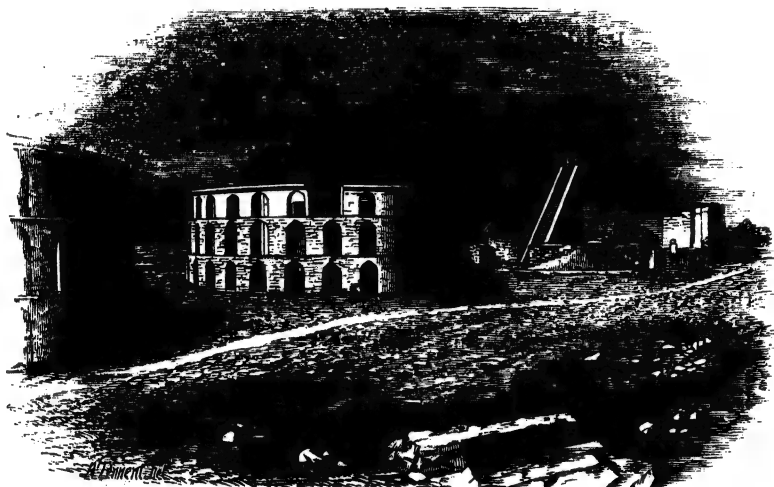


TOMB OF HUMAYOON, DELHI.

hundreds of followers, high and low, moving about in the little village of canvas tents which had been pitched in that strange place, amidst carriages, horses, and elephants, the locomotive forces of her peripatetic court.

Beyond this regal gathering, nothing lay before us save the desert waste and its tenantless abodes. Among the latter the most conspicuous and entire was the tomb of Humayoon, which, being a favourable specimen of its class, merits a word of notice.

It is a stately granite building, surmounted by a white marble dome, and standing, as will be seen from the woodcut, on an immense terrace. Within are a series of empty chambers surrounding a great central hall, in which a cenotaph of white marble, dwarfed by the magnitude of its surroundings into the dimensions of a toy, indicates the resting place of one whose



THE OBSERVATORY, DELHI.

regal pleasure it was to seek posthumous distinction in the splendour of his tomb.

The name of Humayoon belongs to an important epoch in Delhian history. It was he who, coming from Persia in 1554, inaugurated that rapid but brilliant series of reigns which terminated towards the end of the seventeenth century with those of Aurungzebe and Shah Jehan. In the days of the former sovereign the growth of the city is said to have cul-

minated in a population of 2,000,000 ; and it was the latter who founded the present Delhi, while the now desolate neighbourhood outside the walls was yet fresh and fair.

Among the ruins of the Observatory, or Junter Munter, lay several of its huge astronomical appliances crumbling in the dust. The most interesting of these was the great dial by which the sun's azimuth was wont to be observed, and which the Rajah of Jeypore, to whom it owed its existence, delighted to name the 'Prince of Dials.' In such a country this nobleman may well be remembered as himself a 'prince' of science and a worthy example to his class. For truly no more effectual means could be employed to dispel the darkness that overshadows a land of astrology and divination than an intelligent observation of the truths revealed by astronomy. Nor is the lesson specially difficult to acquire. To weigh the bulk, compute the distance, and define the orbits of the celestial bodies, through the instrumentality of complex mechanisms devised for the purpose, is of course only the part of the great mathematical astronomer. In that sense it may be truly said of this science, *veritas in puteo*. But the study, even in its simpler form, is elevating, as furnishing an exposition of the general laws of creation, and is in fact the natural antidote for those wild fancies on that subject which enslave the Eastern mind. Certain it is that, for centuries past, the nations of Asia have been groping in darkness beneath the clear light of heaven ; for it can scarcely be doubted that a moderate degree of familiarity with astronomical knowledge among the people would go far to diminish the pernicious influence of a priesthood whose astrological books and implements are among the chief talismans of their power. Nor is the glorious lesson likely to be less

effectual now that photography and the spectroscope have unfolded a clearer view of the stellar universe to mankind; and that, under the observation of such men as Kirchhoff and



KUTUB MINAR, DELHI.

Balfour Stewart, Lockyer and De la Rue, the heavenly orbs are *writing their own biography in sparkling lines of light.*

A little farther into the waste and we were amidst records of the fourteenth century dating from the reign of Ferozeshah.

Within some of these ruins, poor families had found convenient homes. About a mile in advance from this spot, and nine miles beyond the modern city, stands that wonderful leaning tower of Delhi—the Kutub Minar—which is formed of five balconies (the first four of red granite and the last of white marble) gradually lessening in circumference, and rises 242 feet high, crowned with a beautiful cupola. The structure is aged, and mocks by its perfect condition the futile efforts which have been made to trace its history. So fresh, indeed, does the peerless column look after having been repaired by the Indian Government in 1826, that it bears the burden of 700 years as if it were a trophy of the present century. Beside the Kutub stand the remains of the Jumna Musjid of ancient Delhi, which, as the story goes, was built out of the spoils of twenty-seven Hindoo temples pulled down for that purpose, thus furnishing at once a conspicuous example of Moslem grandeur and Moslem toleration about the end of the twelfth century.

Here, deeply imbedded in the soil, lies the centre of destruction, partly concealed by a wild growth of trees and plants. Clustered round the Kutub, in a dense heap, appear the ruins of a handsome Hindoo palace and temple, together with many others of mosques, *serais*, and imperial tombs, among which rises the famous deep-sunken iron pillar represented in the traditions of the country as having rested on the head of the world-supporting snake-god Lishay, during the sovereignty of the old Hindoo kings.

Some of the Arabic inscriptions on the stones are not yet obliterated, and one especially may be noticed as teaching the moral lesson of the place :—

The Prophet, on whom be God's blessing, says, 'he who builds a mosque for God, God will build a similar house for him in heaven.'

In the heart of ancient Delhi the course of several streets may still be traced. A strange jumble they exhibit of shattered marble steps and pillars mingled with the black, moss-covered fragments of fallen walls and domes, among which appear, at intervals, the signs of a human habitation formed among the *debris*. As we walked through what seemed the main thoroughfare of that once-crowded and handsome capital of the Patan sovereigns, the only dwellers we encountered were two women each sitting on a broken doorstep plying a tiny spinning wheel, and one solitary old man weaving (if the process could be so called) coarse cloth on a frame erected in a vacant space in the shadow of a crumbling wall. It thus appeared, however, that the industries of Patan Delhi, albeit at a low ebb, were not, like its pride and pageantry, absolutely dead and gone.

Near at hand and surrounded by a few hamlets is the celebrated well to which visitors are attracted through the performances of which it is the theatre. The natives aver that it contains sixty feet of water, the surface of which lies at a similar depth below the ground level. Without being able to vouch for the accuracy of their statement, I can testify to the giddy effect of a glance down the shaft of this water mine, which may be about double the diameter of that of an ordinary coal pit. It was difficult to believe that the little band of coolies, by whom we were quickly surrounded, were about to commit themselves to this terrible gulf. Yet so it was. First, one tall fellow approached the brink and, without condescending to preface his feat with the evolutions of an ordinary mountebank, leapt lightly into the void which he

traversed, not head foremost like Satan in some picture of his fall, but erect, with a complacent face and a fine airy poise, cutting the water when he reached it as cleanly as a sharp-edged stone by setting his feet close together and his arms flat to his sides at the moment of immersion. A very slight departure from the straight line, a trifling loss of balance, and he would inevitably have impinged to the peril of his life on that circular wall of stone the width of which left him little room for deviation. As it was,

‘Scarce had he sunk beneath the aqueous floor’

ere he reappeared at our side like an apparition, having escaped through a submerged passage into an adjoining reservoir, possessing a ready way of egress. Then followed other divers in gradually increasing swiftness of succession, until leap and plash followed one another with the celerity and vigour of a schoolboy game. Children here are trained almost from infancy to this dangerous performance, which probably would be otherwise impossible of accomplishment.

No company of spangled *artistes* in European cirque or amphitheatre had ever afforded us so exciting an entertainment as that here provided by a small group of poor natives among the ruins of ancient Delhi; while the trifling fee we gave, to be divided among them, was regarded as a liberal reward, and elicited by way of a concluding performance a round of respectful *salaams*.

Strange as it may appear, the suburbs of modern Delhi, now such a wilderness of decay, must have been very beautiful and luxuriant not more than a century and a half ago, when

the glory of the Moguls was at its zenith. Many of the remains lie buried out of sight; among them those subterranean watercourses, which, we read, traversed the principal districts and led to the mansions of the noblesse. In those days, too, a splendid canal served to conduct water to the city from a distance of seventy miles, and thus an extensive system of irrigation imparted life and green fertility to a soil which is now sandy and dead. Much has been achieved, and more is being done, by the British Government to restore the means of cultivation. But thorough and terrible is the present scene of transformation in contrast with that not very distant period, when the palaces of the Indian nobility occupied the sites of these mouldering walls, and the deserted waste around was a populated, fruitful region intersected by royal roads, daily traversed by state carriages and elephants caparisoned in gold. Then the Mussulman inhabitant of the proud, stately city, leaving its crowded streets, was wont to ramble far into the country among fields and gardens, where Omrahs of the empire dwelt; and troops of pilgrims came from distant quarters of the land to feast their eyes on the gorgeous palaces, and to worship at the saintly shrines of Delhi.

And it so happens that the final incident in this tale of ruin is the most tragic and impressive. The last Padshah died, a few years ago, a pensioner on the bounty of the Indian Government. The spectacle repeated through past generations of an imperial ruler on a jewelled throne dissolves into that of a plain wooden building on the banks of the Irrawaddy, wherein Mahomed Bahadur, a mindless and decrepit old man, the descendant of Baber, and Timour, and Ghengis Khan,

breathes out a life of impotence and desertion. As for the noble followers who crowded his court in Delhi, those who escaped with life dwell in judicial banishment or voluntary exile; and the intelligence of to-day runs, that of all these 'not half a dozen' remain who are qualified by position to appear at a viceregal *darbar*.

Before leaving the city we witnessed a feat of jugglery infinitely more novel and attractive than any to which I have elsewhere referred. One evening, 'tween the gloamin' and the mirk,' or just as the twilight was lapsing into darkness, a demure, silent figure appeared at the bungalow door, and making a short *salaam* glided without further ceremony into the shadowy room, as though he were the *genius loci*. Selecting in a moment the spot that seemed to serve his purpose best, he seated himself with his back to the wall, and produced from the folds of his dress a small *tom-tom* together with a large box. The contents of the latter proved to be a number of lords and ladies on foot or mounted, together with horses and carriages, all formed of pasteboard or some such material, and these our unbidden guest scattered on the floor around him, apparently without plan or order. There they lay, nawabs, rajahs, and baboos, among steeds and chariots in the like fallen condition. But soon the monotonous thrum of the *tom-tom* seemed to breathe energy into the prostrate figures. A carriage endeavoured to jerk itself on end—a horse made a spasmodic effort to rise. At length a noble lady enacted the part of awaking to consciousness, and leaping to her feet hopped into a vehicle which, from also occupying a recumbent position, had suddenly presented itself, like that of Cinderella, ready for her use. No sooner

done than carriage and lady moved away. The journey indeed was short and perilous, and the coach came to grief somewhere about the window corner; still the lady had had a ride. But the drone of the life-inspiring *tom-tom* continued; now a warrior found his legs and mounted a horse which had stood up for his accommodation; and so for a few minutes the mimic actors rose, moved, and fell, until the sound of the *tom-tom* ceased and all was still. Then the mute magician, getting up, gathered them together into their receptacle, and having thankfully received a rupee for his performance slipped away into the gloom of the verandah with the same ghostlike silence that had marked his entrance.

We quite failed to observe the machinery of action in this exhibition; and were driven to imagine, as an after-thought, that the ten supple fingers so diligently thrumming the *tom-tom*, and even the ten bare toes of the performer, might, through the instrumentality of invisible connecting threads, guided by some high-trained skill, have been the motive powers of these complicated evolutions with which we had been so curiously entertained.

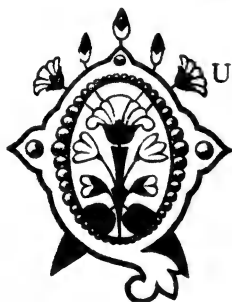


CHAPTER XXXVI.

MARRIAGE AND FEMALE EDUCATION.

Of earthly goods the best is a good wife;
A bad, the bitterest curse of human life.—SIMONIDES.

Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made,—WORDSWORTH.



QUESTIONS of human interest in India are not resolved by the masses on the principles of experience and common sense so much as on the dictates of soothsaying, divination, and astrology. Among the events thus regulated, the all-important one of marriage occupies a conspicuous place. Lucky days for the ceremony are proclaimed by the priesthood; auspicious weeks and months are foretold, so that of Asiatic marriages it can be truly said, if I may be pardoned the familiar pleasantry, that they 'never come single.' It so happened that we had arrived in Delhi during one of these propitious periods, and the city was each day alive with processions filing through the streets to the strains of fife and drum. On every such occasion a strenuous effort is made to render the spectacle as imposing as possible, it being apparently understood, between the observant public on the one part and the love-con-

tracting parties on the other, that the appearance of the turn-out will be held as the measure of the social *status* and respectability of the pair. Reputations for wealth are sustained and suspicions of poverty averted by an artful exhibition of domestic resources, in which, not unfrequently, beds, tables, even pots and pans—the *curta supellex* of the couple—occupy a place. Thus the family ‘effects’ are often musically paraded through the streets as a component part of the wedding march.

To the poor, therefore, marriage is a serious affair in another sense besides that in which it is universally so regarded. A friend in Bombay informed us that, on entering his office one morning, he found a favourite *peon* (messenger) in tears. The poor fellow was evidently in deep distress. He had lost his wife on the preceding night; and, as the humble dwelling of such a man might be not the less an abode of love, our friend could not but look with pity on his misery; for, indeed, he seemed a bereaved husband respecting whom the words of Waller might be quoted,

‘O cruel death to those you are more kind
Than to the wretched mortals left behind.’

The good master then sought to console the unhappy *peon*, who thereupon took courage to reveal the secret of his woe. It had, he sobbed forth, ‘cost him fifty rupees to get married, and he could not decently espouse another wife under the like sum!’

The more common-place of two nuptial processions, which came in our way at Delhi, was headed by a band of drummers, making such a terrific noise that no other instrument—had such been at hand—would have had the slightest chance of a hearing. A few *dhootie*-clad figures followed, in the midst of

which appeared the bridegroom mounted on a high horse and radiant with scarlet trousers, beneath which dangled naked ankles and feet. Besides these magnificent pantaloons he was adorned with nothing save a wreath of marigold, which however circled his head with more than the grandeur of an imperial crown, the horse also being decorated with a frontlet of the same favourite flower. The desired result—a great show with little substance—could scarcely have been more ingeniously obtained. Then came the bride, invisibly caged in a common close palanquin, and after her a display of domestic articles, among which the chief object of value and centre of attraction was the nuptial couch! A couple of square boxes, containing painted images and borne aloft on poles, brought up the rear.

There were crowds in the streets of Delhi that day, in whose eyes even this exhibition excited much interest. Soon, however, a still more animated feeling was aroused. Streams of citizens came pouring from the cross streets into the main thoroughfare; eager faces appeared at the windows of the houses; and all eyes were set intently in one direction, whence came a hubbub of voices mingled with the sound of lively music. Everything indicated the approach of another and more extensive marriage display. Here a really good band of music first revealed itself, heading a train of handsomely adorned palanquins, occupied, as we were told, by the immediate friends of the youthful pair. These luxurious conveyances were succeeded by an extraordinary chain of large square boards, to the number, as we estimated, of between forty and fifty, each borne on the heads or shoulders of a knot of male and female coolies, and sustaining a variety of attractive objects—such

as trees and flowers, gods and temples, or human effigies in spangled raiment. On some of these platforms bloomed miniature gardens in real, not artificial, beauty, with fountains of scented water actually playing; while the attraction of others was a *nautch* girl, swaying her bare arms and bending her lithe figure to mark the evolutions of the dance, under circumstances where the wonder was she could even maintain her equilibrium. This imposing show was succeeded by another musical band, followed in its turn by a second long line of palanquins, some of which were empty and only useful to swell the show, the greater number, however, apparently being occupied by children in gold and silver tinsel. Then came the so-called family stud, comprising thirteen horses in rich trappings; and after these another party of native musicians, with flute, drum, and cymbals vigorously discoursing, with what appreciation on their own part it would be difficult to say, the popular English air of 'The Girl I left behind me.' At length the boy bridegroom made his appearance bedizened with gold lace, as well as what may or may not have been precious stones, and riding on a handsome white horse likewise in showy gear. He was surrounded by a number of bearers carrying toy images of deities, temples, and other characteristic objects; and these, with some more palanquins and a large shabby retinue, closed a spectacle of the Chandnee Chowk, which must have gladdened the public eye of Delhi for at least half an hour.

It may safely be concluded, that a change in the immemorial marriage customs of the people of India will be among the earliest fruits of the educational system now in progress. Some Hindoo and Mahomedan husbands have begun to distrust the

teaching of their ancient philosophy, to the effect that only ignorant women can be good mothers and useful wives. The Bengal Government in the Report to which I have already alluded, officially announces that an offer had been received and accepted from Koomer Chunder Nath Roy, of Nattore, to contribute towards the establishment of a new female normal school the sum of 125 rupees a month for ten years, provided the Government would sanction a 'grant in aid' of double that amount. This is only one evidence out of many of an extensive movement which has arisen everywhere throughout the three Presidencies. Brahminical influence is, moreover, perceptibly on the decline in households where the priest had sought and found in the gentler sex that blind adherence to his dogmas which had begun to wane in the case of men who were participating every day in the more sensible routine of life growing up around them. The well-instructed class of natives already take an interest in the education of their girls. And it must be remembered that, up till 1854, no attempt had been made in the direction of female education. Bengal has now 240 state-aided seminaries for native girls with 4,685 pupils, and a large number of similar schools receiving no assistance from the Government; besides *patshalas*, or village schools, with an attendance of 2,000 girls. But even this condition of progress is not so encouraging as that apparent in Bombay, where female education is still farther advanced. Recent accounts from the North-West state that the average attendance in all the female schools was estimated at about 6,000; while from the Punjaub we learn that the work of the Zenana missionaries was going on satisfactorily. The official account rendered last year from the Central Provinces, under the ad-

ministration of Mr. George Campbell (the able author of 'Modern India' and other important works), may be regarded as peculiarly interesting with reference to social as well as territorial questions. In that report Government received information to the effect that one person out of every 206 of the population was at school, and that in these provinces neither did females lead a secluded life, as in most other parts of India, nor was there any prejudice against their mental culture. The school examinations were freely attended by both sexes, and boys and girls sat side by side in the same class-room where, six years previously, the education of woman was a reproach and a blank.

Hitherto a great obstacle to the spread of female schools has existed in the prejudice entertained by Hindoo girls of high caste against mixing with their humbler sisters in the social scale. The Mahommedan classes, however, are not thus shackled; and, as normal schools extend, this barrier appears to be gradually giving way. Much difficulty has also attended the effort to induce educated native females to become teachers in these seminaries, such an occupation being at open war with their social rules. A committee of native gentlemen reporting their views to Government last year on this subject, expressed their conviction that no important result in that direction could be obtained until native ladies, the wives and daughters of *zemindars* and other members of the higher class, were gradually induced to forego their habits of seclusion.

It may be that a few prominent examples would serve to initiate the desiderated movement. European ladies everywhere throughout India are warm supporters of the educational cause.

Would it not be possible for them to devise some plan of union with such wives and daughters in this work without offence to self-respect on either side ?

In any event, however, it may be taken for granted as regards female education in India, that the barrier of ages has been broken through, and that the institution of marriage will gradually assume a more reasonable aspect as woman finds her true place in life. The present system indeed, if system it can be called, seems to be a mixture of confusion and barbarity. While the *Sumsher Bahadoor* of Ahmedabad is calling on Government to put down the practice among certain Hindoos 'of enriching themselves at the sacrifice of the interest and happiness of their daughters, whom they ungrudgingly give in marriage to the highest bidder, no matter if he be old and infirm,' we hear of a tribe among whom the value of a bride is definitely fixed at a pair of oxen, a cow, and seven rupees. Elsewhere, on the contrary, whole clans exist whose habit it is to accept no wife without a considerable dowry. So intolerable had this latter evil become, that the Rajah of Bansee, a leading man in the district of these extortionate bachelors, lately set an example of reformation by having some of his own family married 'without any dowry,' as well as 'with only very small processions,' an act for which the estimable Rajah duly received the written thanks of Government.

The ancient custom of marrying at an early age prevails alike among Hindoos and Mussulmans, but, according to a writer in one of the Calcutta newspapers, with this difference, that among the latter the contracting parties do not even see the lady ; nor is any relation, male or female, of the bridegroom permitted to look

upon her previous to the marriage ceremony. When, however, the father of the Hindoo bridegroom proceeds in company with his friends to make proposals, the ceremony of what is called 'seeing house and bride' is gone through, both parties partaking of sherbet and betel nut if all goes well. Of course the bride thus wooed by proxy may or may not be a child. There is no rule in point of age. But it would appear that the custom of betrothing young members of Indian families is in many cases practically no more than a mutual overture of friendship between the parents. To the native mind the interchange of such little compliments is peculiarly pleasant, this feeling, in fact, often predominating over that of responsibility as regards the consummation of the proposed transaction.

It would, however, be wrong to suppose that the habit itself is universal. There are both Hindoo and Mahommedan parents who repudiate such engagements on principle, while certain native teachers and lecturers exist who publicly denounce them. The intelligent Mussulman correspondent of an Anglo-Indian journal, for example, laments that such a rule should prevail among his order, condemns it as an evil descended from pre-Mahommedan times, and cites the example of Mahomet himself, who declined to see his daughter Fatima married until she had passed her fifteenth year, so that she might use her discretion in choosing a husband.

But, after all has been said, I imagine the popular account rendered by Indian society itself is, that, ceremonials apart, the affections of life are not, even as a rule, to be thus bought and sold. Hindostan is proverbially a land of sentiment, where it is meet that love should choose its own idol. Un-

happily, however, for the prospects of every Hindoo bride, the intervention of death is rendered a double blow to the widow. *Suttee* has been abolished, but the odour of its horrors remains in the life of self-sacrifice which is generally exacted from the bereaved wife. To deck her hair with a flower, or to bestow a smile upon a member of the opposite sex, may suffice to elicit the covert suspicion, if not the open rebuke, of her neighbours as actions unbecoming in *her*, and disrespectful to the memory of the departed—a species of persecution from which the law that now happily shields her from the flames can afford no protection.

Meanwhile education and marriage have been linked together in another and more amusing sense. A great demand has arisen for bridegrooms who have taken a university degree! The young baboo who can add M.A. or B.A. to his name is a highly favoured visitor in Indian society; and if the popular voice speaks true, these graduates may secure eligible wives and dowries solely by reason of such potent initials. The mere prospect indeed of gaining a degree is highly prized, and stands for its proper value, like a *spes successionis* or fortune in the Court of Chancery. And the pride of the paternal heart in this matter rises to a height which British ladies will scarcely appreciate or respect. Among the fresh items of public intelligence from Calcutta we find it recorded that the father of one of the late successful candidates at the Civil Service examination, when unable, after much entreaty, to persuade this recreant son to return to his home from on board the Peninsular and Oriental Company's steamer, in which he had taken his passage for Europe, extracted from him, as the only consolation remaining in the circumstances, a promise that he would not marry in England!

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE MOFUSSIL.

God made the country and man made the town ;
 What wonder, then, that health and virtue, gifts
 That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
 That life holds out to all, should most abound
 And least be threaten'd in the fields and groves.—COWPER.



Our progress from city to city we traversed 'the *Mofussil*,' an expression which, in the Indian vocabulary, answers to our conventional term 'the country,' signifying anywhere out of town. It need scarcely be told that the affairs of such a vast area of human existence are infinitely complicated and involved. Many volumes would not contain the story of rural India, nor has it yet been written.

We notice as a primary and peculiar feature in the annals of the country, that both its literature and popular observances are founded on the wildest creations of fancy. It is not enough that there are holy cities and sanctifying shrines dispersed throughout the land, to which the Hindoo peasant may direct his steps on the occasion of any special pious festival or individual prompting to devotion ; the whole land of his birth is for him alike bewitched and hallowed. The tree on one side of his cot, the well on the other, and the shapeless block of stone

that lumbers the adjacent field, may one and all possess supernatural associations and demand his reverence. Such, throughout all the vicissitudes of many dynastic revolutions, has been the moral condition of rural India from immemorial times.

Mr. James Ferguson, in his learned work published last year, on ancient forms of worship, states as the result of his researches that, 'before the Aryans reached India, the inhabitants of the valley of the Ganges seem to have been Tree and Serpent worshippers—a people without any distinct idea of God, and apparently worshipping their ancestors.' Mr. W. W. Hunter, as



has been stated, is now writing the history of rural Bengal, and the interesting information which has already emanated from his powerful pen, together with such graphic details as those given by Captain Lewin in his official report on the hill tracts of Chittagong, prove at once the vast complexity of the subject, and the fact that there exist among the non-Aryan populations of India tribes with habits of life altogether different, and a worship infinitely more simple than those which are founded on the Vedas. But everywhere mysticism and superstition in some form, from the worship of unseen devils to the deification of natural objects,

cloud and pervert the popular understanding. Nor was the policy of the Mahommedan princes, under whom, prior to the advent of British dominion, the poor ryot acted his part in the cultivation of the soil, of a nature calculated to awaken him from his dream. The government of the day owned the land, which was let and sublet by involved and wasteful processes, that rendered him the victim of tyrant masters, and held him in the condition of a slave.

Under the old Hindoo rulers, indeed, there seems to have been a better system of land tenure than that which subsequently prevailed. There were, for example, such institutions as tillage co-operative societies, the members of which, called Meerasidars, paid their rent direct to the sovereign. But when Mussulman rule became dominant, the Meerasidar class, so well fitted by residence and association to be the poor man's employers, gradually disappeared, and a great portion of the land was indiscriminately allotted to farmers of the revenue, the money thus obtained being carried off to uphold the monarchical glory of the capital.

Such was the rural condition of the country when the East India Company, constituted only as a trading body, although eventually assuming the position of landlord, entered on their new possession. Nor does it appear that the remedial measures instituted by that association had much effect in putting down the malpractices of zemindars, or improving the condition of the ryot. It is now a hundred years since British statesmen first engaged with this gigantic subject. The 'settlement of the lands of India' was a vexed question in the days of Warren Hastings, who in a letter to the East India Company, written in 1772,

pointed out the pernicious results of the prevailing system as manifested in the wretched condition of the peasantry, and urged that governments had a graver duty to fulfil than that of reaping the revenues of the soil. The discussions of recent years were complicated with the conflicting arguments—which do not require to be recounted here—of the ‘leasehold’ and the ‘fixed assessment’ schools; but, after an earnest consideration of the whole subject, the Indian Government proposed to adopt the plan of a ‘*permanent settlement of the land revenue throughout India*,’ on the principle of giving to the native agricultural population *permanency of tenure and fixity of rent*. The necessity of respecting existing rights and claims among interests so complicated and heterogeneous gave this measure no greater scope than that of a change which time would gradually develop and extend. Eventually, however, the proposed course was abandoned, and the old system, or rather systems, of tenure (for the circumstances are different in the several Presidencies) were retained. In Bengal the *zemindary* plan under a permanent settlement has existed since 1794, to the great advantage, as it has turned out, of the native contractors. In Bombay and the North-West Provinces land is chiefly held under a thirty years’ lease, while in Madras the system of one year’s tenure still prevails, pending a solution of the peculiar difficulties with which the question is there beset.

Taking the circumstances of Upper Bengal as an example of the *zemindary* system, we find in these districts both native and European *zemindars*, the latter, however, in small proportion. The Government tax is, on an average, one rupee per *beegah*, which comprises an area of 3,025 superficial yards. This as-

assessment is collected quarterly, and non-payment by sunset on the fixed day entitles the State to take possession of the land ; in which event it is sold by auction to the highest bidder, subject, of course, to the yearly tax. Among native *zemindars* the custom is to farm out ground to the ryot or *assaamee*, who, on the expiry of twelve years (if the lease contain no provision to the contrary), becomes a *Goojustah* holder with a perpetual title to the land on regular payment of the originally stipulated rent—a title of which he can only be dispossessed by a decree obtained from the collector's court finding that such rent is inadequate to the value of the property. As, however, the requisite proof to that effect, when such does exist, can only be rendered through a tedious legal process, the tenant is seldom evicted, and may thus himself become a landlord in a small way.

European *zemindars*, on the other hand, do not permit their ryots to become *Goojustah* holders, this being expressly provided for in the *pottahs* or leases, which are granted for terms of from three to seven years. As the land increases in value through the effects of cultivation and more accessible markets, the rent is raised precisely after the manner of improved Scotch farms, which are put up to public competition on the expiry of a tenant's lease.

Touching the views of Government regarding the respective merits of the *ryotwary*, or peasant proprietor, and the *zemindary*, or landlord, systems, between which the face of the country is divided, it has been resolved to create no more of the latter in their present form, leaving the régime as it now exists to die out.

The *zemindary* is commonly a cluster of villages with the land pertaining to them, overruling which the native *zemindar* or

mootah has hitherto occupied, more especially in retired localities, a too independent position, enacting in many cases the part of a petty prince, and holding the people in abject subjection to his will. But now the railway system, which has already let in the light on many of these isolated scenes of tyranny, will serve to carry towards them the reforming influence of the law.

It should be observed, however, that native *zemindars* are an immense body of very heterogeneous constitution, comprising the extremes of small farmers even devoid of education, and of lordly proprietors with a high position in the social scale, many of their number being known as honest men and excellent landlords. Thus the whole province of Benares, including the districts of Benares, Mirzapore, Ghazeepore, and Jounpore, which received a permanent settlement seventy-five years ago, belongs to the Maharajah Ishree Pershad Narain Singh Bahadoor, a Veda Brahmin now about fifty years of age, who, in the cultivation of his magnificent estate, is said to exercise much kindness and liberality towards his tenantry. It is well also to remember that in secluded parts of the country the *zemindary* proprietor may readily become the victim of mistake or malice; even now the Indian press abounds with letters of accusation and recrimination on this subject, between which it is difficult to judge.

The *ryotwary* system prevails in Bombay and Madras while the plan of farming on a large scale, so long established in Bengal, has taken firm root in that Presidency.

It would seem that the former of these methods, affording as it does the cultivator an interest in the work of his hands, is, among such a people, better calculated than the other to stimulate in-

dustry, and so to develop the resources of the soil. This consideration, however, is confronted with that of the extraordinary amount of labour which the collection of rents necessarily entails in districts comprising perhaps 50,000 or 60,000 individuals in the position of tenants.

In a field so wide and chequered it is impossible to speak shortly of the machinery employed for that important office in other than mere general terms, but the following may be regarded as the main features of the system:—

The European superintendent of a series of districts is provided with a staff of native collectors, each of whom once a year goes the round of the locality allotted to him, in order to observe its condition, and obtain the information required by his superior. The report which this collector furnishes is framed with the assistance of a native accountant, and records the name and family affairs of each individual ryot, his conduct and character, the extent of his stock, the money he has paid, and other necessary particulars. Having studied these details, the superintendent himself appears on the scene and summons the ryots around him, with a view to future arrangements and a settlement of existing difficulties, affording each man the opportunity of preferring any complaint he may desire to make. Strange and suggestive incidents arise at such meetings, for the Hindoo mind is fertile in expedients when stimulated by the prospect of gain, and the conduct of Indian village scribes is not invariably regulated on principles of justice and impartiality.

European intercourse has not yet visibly changed the ancient constitution of the Indian village, which, in its normal aspect, is still a complete autonomy. There, along with the cultivators

who constitute the bulk of the inhabitants, reside the necessary functionaries of the social system — baker, doctor, blacksmith, potter, teacher, carpenter, policeman, as well as the superfluous soothsayer and astrologer, each of these occupations being hereditary in families, and descending, like that of the French executioners, from father to son. In the North-West the people of each village (Hindoo or Mahomedan) choose a head man, called in Hindostanee the *Lumbadar*, who acts as a local justice of the peace and settles all disputes. None but popular men are ever exalted to this position. There are also *Chowdrees*, whose part it is to find employment for the lower classes, and to fulfil such duties as supplying travellers with palanquins, or coolie service.

In the remoter Mofussil districts artisans are generally paid for their services in kind, their poor employers discharging the debt incurred in such agricultural produce (cotton, grain, or oil, for instance), as they may happen to possess. Thus the ryot's little crop is often his only bank account. So much of it may belong to the *zemindar* for arrears of rent, so much to the *seth*, or village banker, for money advanced to procure seed and meet current expenses. The remainder, if happily there be such, he is at liberty, after meeting all his obligations, to convey in a bullock *hackrie* to the nearest town and sell for cash.

These simple villagers are, as a rule, both cleanly and orderly in their habits; although in many cases so ignorant as not to know the name of neighbouring communities a few miles away. The judicial system, under the protection of which they live, is necessarily of an improvised and imperfect character. The country is divided into districts, in one of the

largest villages of which a court of justice is periodically held. At this court the entire business of the district is finally disposed of, unless there be some case of sufficient importance to call for an adjournment to the nearest headquarters of the Government. From the simple fact that a court sitting for the disposal of petty cases may be thus of necessity forty or fifty miles distant from communities coming under its jurisdiction, we obtain a glimpse of the magnitude of the difficulty involved in the effort to administer justice in India. So long as a week's journey, going and returning, stands between the poor native and the ear of the law, he must continue to be the victim of oppression and fraud. No better fate, however, has he ever known, and it is satisfactory to think that the prospect is at last brightening around him.

It was doubtless with the view of supplying this desideratum, as well as to serve those purposes of life where delicacy forbids the intervention of the law, that village communities instituted their *punchayet*, a meeting consisting literally of five, but practically of from three to seven persons chosen from among themselves. It is one of the 'sights' of the Mofussil to behold the members of this deliberative assembly, in one of its humbler forms, seated in a circle round a small fire in the usual attitude, with knees and shoulders in proximity, debating some case of default in their circle, and passing judgment on the offender. The award may be expulsion from his caste, a fine payable in rupees, or simply the provision of an entertainment for the whole body politic, including, of course, the collective presence of the *punchayet*. Should this last be the finding of the conclave, a more animated spectacle ensues, representing a score or so of

villagers squatted somewhere on their own domain, actively regaling themselves, with the aid of both hands, on curried fowl and boiled rice saturated in *ghee*, together with a service of sweetmeats, the crestfallen host, perhaps, sitting apart ruefully contemplating the proceedings and calculating the cost !

The villages of North-Western India are usually well constructed of baked mud and thatch, the interior of the houses being clean and white-washed. The favourite form is three sides of a square, with the entrance doors in the yard. It only requires to be added that the rural organization to which I have alluded applies only to the more populous villages. There are thousands of hamlets in which the *chokydar*, or watchman, is the only visible representative of authority, marching about with a gaudy red turban and a shining brass plate (his badge of office), a supreme potentate in his own little territory.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AGRA, AS IT WAS AND IS.

O how weak is mortal man! . . .
 'Tis passing strange to mark his fallacies:
 Behold him proudly view some pompous pile
 Whose high dome swells to emulate the skies,
 And smile, and say my name shall live with this
 Till Time shall be no more.—HENRY KIRKE WHITE.



EARLY on the morning after we had exhausted the sights of Delhi, our gharries stood at the door, but on this occasion to take different ways (the course of our friends being still northward), and, for the first time since we met, there was no comparing and clubbing of our rations, — no appointment for meeting by the way. It only remained to say farewell, and to express the hope we all cherished of meeting again to recall the incidents of the scenes we had traversed so pleasantly together. Our native servant Gophall, who had passed a too brief but truly glorious holiday in what was to him an enchanted land, reassumed his place among the baggage aloft, clothed like an eastern prince, and animated no doubt by

a resolution to regale his compatriots at home with an account of the wonders he had seen.

We were now on our way to Agra, and once more in the midst of those peculiarities of the road to which I have already sufficiently adverted. Again the gharry rolled and jingled to the strains of the *gorriwallah's* horn; again stubborn little horses were coaxed or pushed into motion; and again we encountered the picturesque stream of life flowing in the Grand Trunk Road, bounded on either side by the wide, shining plain haunted by kites and crows.

As a few details even of the school-book kind cannot well be avoided in a descriptive narrative, I must here recall the historical facts—that the city of Agra is about 300 years old, that it was the seat of the Mogul empire till the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was superseded by Delhi, and that it is now the Government capital of the North-West Provinces of Bengal.

Of the Presidency itself no more need be said than that it is a wide fertile tract of country irrigated by numerous canals, besides being intersected by the two great rivers, Ganges and Jumna, and that nowhere in India has the superiority of British rule rendered itself more apparent in the increased welfare of the people and the improved cultivation of the land. Nevertheless the city of Agra resembles Delhi in being girt for miles around with the ruins of noble edifices that once lent glory to its name, and presents a similar *tout ensemble*, when viewed from the opposite bank of the Jumna, the high embattled walls of its red granite fort occupying the foreground, and an agglomeration of hovels and decayed buildings, mingled with a few stately erec-

tions, stretching into the distance behind. The heaving, creaking bridge of boats with its carpet of straw, on which we crossed the river ; the display of native craft, loading and unloading, or slowly stemming the current ; the hot banks of sand strewn with piles of cotton bales, and the group of washers, male and female, at the edge of the stream, beating blue, yellow, and purple-coloured garments on smooth stones, were already familiar features normal to the place and people.



GATEWAY AT FORT AGRA.

Those who judge of Indian cities from the photographic views, now everywhere current, of their temples and palaces, or who are led away by the rhapsodical strain of some writers on the wealth and grandeur of Asiatic royalty, would, I fear, be strangely disappointed with the reality. Photography is, to a certain extent, an infallible interpreter ; but the trophies of Indian magnificence which it pours out usually stand in isolated splendour apart from the habitations of the people which constitute the city proper ; Government House, and the military lines

(where such exist), together with the usually beautiful villas of the European residents, being, as in the case of Agra, situated at some distance beyond the walls.

Thus Agra, the North-Western seat of government, where the Viceroy now holds his *durbars*, to the neglect of imperial Delhi—Agra, the scene of celebrated palatial splendours, such as the *Shish Mehal* or Palace of Glass, the *Motee Musjid* or Pearl Mosque, and even the world-renowned Taj—first reveals itself to the intramural passenger as little more than a scene of close, narrow thoroughfares, interspersed with waste ground, and surmounted by a few spires. The principal street, no doubt, is to some extent an exception to the rule, being paved with stone, and illuminated in some parts with the tarnished remains of gilding and other signs of departed greatness. The better class of dwellings, too, are set off with terraced roofs and balconies, whence we were scrutinized in passing by inquisitive feminine eyes, though with what measure of approval did not appear. These ladies of course knew that the conjugal ban had been laid on such a wicked act of indulgence, but they wisely relied, no doubt, on the circumstance of being elevated far beyond the observation of their lords and masters, sitting cross-legged at work in their shops below.

Among the industries of the place, that of dyeing cotton cloth in purple and yellow colours appeared to be in extensive operation. The process was effected in the open shop by means of copper vessels sunk in the floor, the warehouse, or place for storing goods and transacting business, being, as in the similar shops of Delhi, the spaces between. It is a well-known fact that the goods thus prepared and sold in premises

of such small compass are not less brilliant in hue than those which are dipped by steam revolving apparatus in the great vats of British manufactories, and find buyers in the trade palaces of London, Manchester, or Glasgow.

But, when the town has been traversed and the Fort reached, the reason appears why Agra is celebrated as a scene of magnificence. Within the spacious but almost deserted precincts of



FORT AT AGRA.

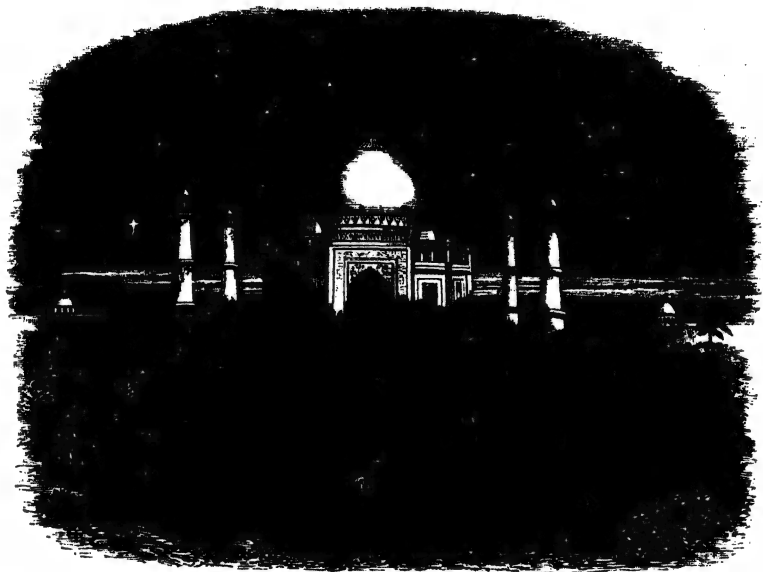
these high red walls stand the 'monarch's palace,' and the other chief memorials of that grandeur which the pen of romance has found delight in celebrating. Of a style of beauty far more chaste than the Jumna Musjid of Delhi is the Pearl Mosque at Agra, crowned with its imposing array of domes—the building itself, and the terrace on which it stands, being one homogeneous pile of pure white marble. We entered by one of the seven open passages (each a rich marble arcade with arched

roof), and in the principal hall or chamber, which is adapted for 600 worshippers by means of as many spaces marked on the marble floor, discovered a few natives as usual with face towards the *kibla*, engaged in the rapid utterance of their prolix devotions, bending their heads at momentary pauses into contact with the stone. The seat being hard, the bend laborious, and the prayers long, the worship of this splendid sanctuary was surely an irksome ordeal.

As regards the celebrated 'Halls of Marvel,' the only marvel visible was the freshness and purity of their white marble walls amidst the palatial wreck around. The Zenana, comprising a number of small apartments (also of marble), supported by many pillars and profusely inlaid with stones more or less precious, is still in tolerable preservation. Here it was that, according to Indian story, the Emperor Shah Jehan was wont to regale himself with the evolutions of the fair inmates, while, for his special pleasure, they romped together at hide and seek in a condition of delectable *déshabille*. No better prospect, I presume, can have cheered the sparkling eyes of these young maidens than the wide expanse of flat country, on which we looked down from the windows of their gorgeous abode. The situation indeed had been chosen and planned with admirable regard to the views of the lord of the Zenana. The gulf below was deep, the fortress wall was high, and the open plain around prohibited the secret approach of a single serenading cavalier.

The magnificent steps and gateways which form the entrance to the Taj of Agra are at some distance from the city, and come suddenly into view at a bending in the fine country road. These lead to a garden, intersected by paved walks, enriched with

marble fountains, and blooming with many choice specimens of eastern plants and flowers. The main approach to the Taj is through a lovely green avenue formed by rows of noble cypresses; and the building, exquisitely constructed of pure



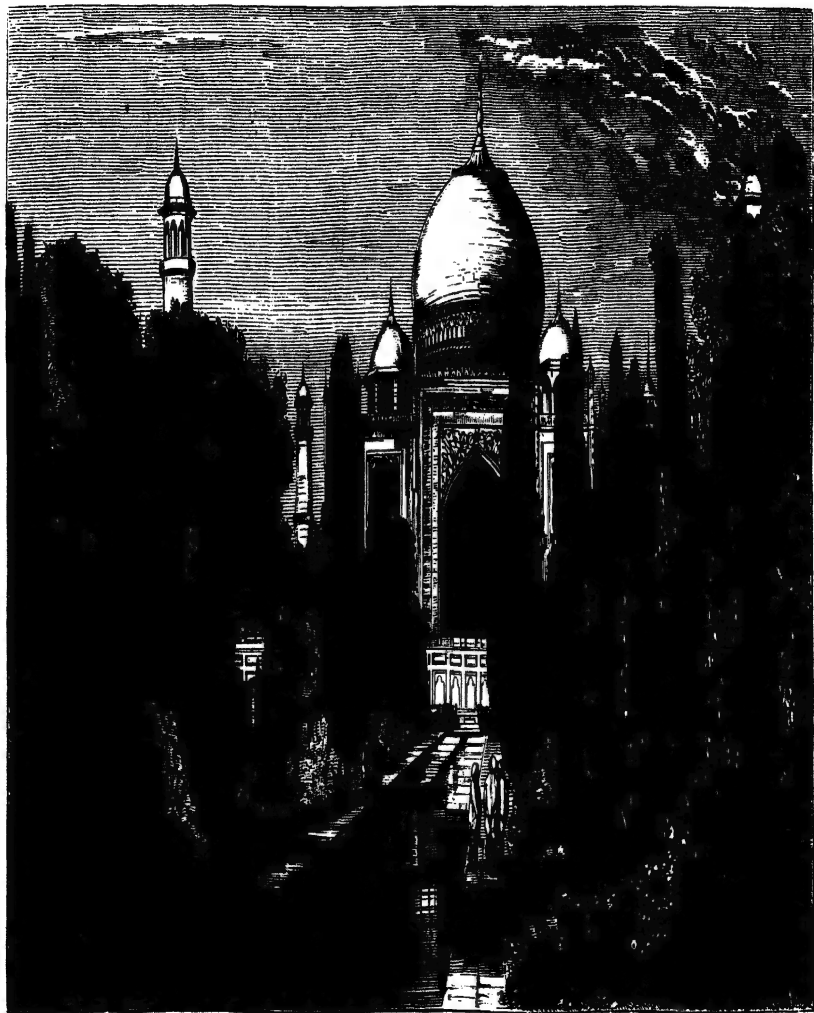
THE TAJ MAHAL, AGRA.

white marble, and flanked with four minarets, stands upon one of those lofty terraces peculiar to Moslem architecture.

To describe the Taj Mahal would, however, be to dwell upon a trite subject. To our minds it suggested the fancy of a handsome ivory toy, expanded by a strong magnifying influence into palatial dimensions. Manifestly, however, the edifice thus so fascinating in itself was infinitely enhanced in effect by its

position and surroundings. What has been justly styled the poetry of its loveliness seemed to spring from those influences of earth and air among which it was set. The high walled garden, with its flowers and fountains, was wholly bounded by the palace itself, so reared on an elevation over the country beyond as to have no other background than the sky, while in front the deep green foliage of the cypress trees exquisitely mingled with and partially concealed its pure white magnificence. In the centre rose the dome, glistening with a flood of sunshine, and on each side two graceful minarets, illusively stretching far into the pale azure sky, with which they seemed to amalgamate like some fair offspring of the light and air. If earthly magnificence were a passport to spiritual glory, there would be few among the departed great so exalted as Shah Jehan, the 'king of the world,' and his consort, familiarly known as Noor Jehan, the 'light of the world,' whose cenotaphs, richly inlaid with precious stones shaped into eulogistic sentences, along with texts from the Koran, and enclosed by an elaborately carved screen hewn out of the solid marble, adorn the centre of the great hall. Their actual place of sepulture, however, is the vault below. But how undeserved, in one case, is this princely mausoleum ! how ironical are these words of praise, when we reflect over whom the spotless marble is reared, and the elaborate falsehoods carved ! Did not Shah Jehan put out the eyes of his brothers, and cause other relations to be strangled for the furtherance of his ambitious plans ?

It was, as we have already seen, the fancy of the Mahommedan princes of India to rear the grandest monuments of their reign in honour of death, glorifying themselves in the act ; and of



TAJ OF AGRA, FROM THE FOUNTAIN.

course it was to this peculiar trait of Moslem royalty that the Taj of Agra owed its unparalleled magnificence. Shah Jehan, we may suppose, looking forward to his own and favourite wife's decease, built such a house as he might aspire to inhabit in the material paradise of his creed, leaving Western strangers of a



INTERIOR OF THE TAJ, AGRA.

future day to wonder why he should have thought so much of a splendid sepulchre, and so little of an honourable fame.

Emanuel Swedenborg records that he saw in a trance the habitations of the angels, which were similar in appearance and construction to earthly mansions, only infinitely more beautiful. It seems unlikely that the dreaming fancy of the seer could

have supplied him with a lovelier example of a building than this which adorns the world of reality ; here, however, the analogy stops, for no angelic forms wandered that day among the marble glories of the Taj. The feet that trod its spacious floors were those of some dolorous-eyed Mussulmans clad in shawls and turbans, together with a grey-haired beggar and a couple of starved-looking boys, who followed us through the echoing halls whining for *bucsheesh*. A few more attractive and exalted visitors no doubt became revealed in another place ; for, as we turned back to take a last view of the charming edifice from the garden, we descried on the top of one of the minarets a picturesque group of Mahommedan worshippers, looking, as they rose and fell in the rapid course of their prostrations, precisely like birds of fine plumage glittering in the sun.

Agra, as all mercantile men know, has a bank which bears its name. It possesses also a large central college, a printing-office, several Christian places of worship, and various charitable and benevolent institutions. The completion, now near at hand, of the railway across country, will bring Agra 114 miles nearer by rail to Bombay than it is to Calcutta, and of course still more within the pale of that rising prosperity which is everywhere manifest in the direct line of traffic.

At the present moment it so happens that Agra is the cynosure of all eyes in India. Contemplated from the Asiatic point of view, the great *darbar* which may, before these pages can appear, have been held there in honour of the Duke of Edinburgh's visit becomes an event of much interest and significance. For not only will all the feudatory nobles of the country dwelling between Cape Comorin and the Snowy Range

be summoned to realize and acknowledge the sovereign power of England in the presence of a member of her royal family, but the occasion will greatly stimulate a desire, recently expressed through some of the native journals, and reiterated since the arrival of his Royal Highness in Calcutta, that one of the Queen's sons should be appointed Viceroy. More than a year ago, indeed, the *Oudh Ukhbar*, an organ of some mark, advocated the immediate choice of the Duke of Edinburgh himself, commenting at the same time on the importance attached by Hindoostanees to the 'caste of a viceroy,' and the feeling of 'veneration and regard' with which His Royal Highness would be welcomed to the viceregal throne. The subject has been further reasoned in the following characteristic strain :—

'Another argument is this: by having a Prince for Viceroy, the Government of England will be spared the expense of his pension, as the Prince who receives the allowance of a Viceroy of India ought to find it sufficient for his expenses.'

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'The Fenians are in England, are great rebels, and faithless to their salt, whereas the Hindoostanees in general pay the Viceroy of Hind great respect and gratitude. Still that amount of love and gratitude will never be given to any Viceroy as would be given to a Prince. A Viceroy is but a working man; but a Prince is a Prince. And if Hindoostanees make so much of Europeans of no very exalted rank, what would they do for a Prince?'

There seems no reason to question the truth of this statement. If the worship of rank is dying out in England, it is otherwise with her great Indian dependency, where the attractions of royalty appear to be as fresh and fascinating as they

were in the palmy days of the Moguls. Clearly, however, the question here mooted involves considerations of a less favourable nature than those on which such lucubrations are based, and our legislators will, probably, think twice before adopting the dubious policy of establishing an Anglo-Indian royal court in Calcutta.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

POLICE AFFAIRS AND THE CRIMINAL CLASSES.

Iago. Awake! what ho, Brabantio, thieves! thieves! thieves!
 Look to your house, your daughter, and your bags!
 Thieves! thieves!—*Othello.*



AMONG the difficulties which beset the administration of India the complicated topics relating to police and prison regulations occupy a conspicuous place. There are now in Bengal four orders of public guardians, styled respectively the 'regular district,' the 'municipal,' the 'village,' and the 'railway' police. According to the last Administration Report, the strength of the first-mentioned body amounts to 25,578, of the second to 3,734, of the third to 184,846, and of the last to 690 men. These constitute a large force, and entail no small expense upon the country; yet that a policeman cannot be always at hand when he is wanted, and that much misdemeanour must necessarily escape the eye of the law, is apparent from the fact that the combined strength here indicated of the regular and organized municipal bodies affords only one constable to something more than seven square miles of country. It would appear, also, that the legal eye as represented by these functionaries is sometimes

wilfully blind to transgression, the native policeman being too readily bought over, or induced to keep silence from sympathy with his countrymen. Nevertheless, the force, such as it is, has heavy work in hand. Besides the various classes of offenders familiar to our own criminal courts, India is infested with large bodies of armed *dacoits*, or highwaymen, systematically organized, and constantly committing depredations in different parts of the country. The newspapers regularly contain such items of public intelligence as the discovery of 'a numerous band of Sonarias, of whom fifteen had been apprehended at Dacca by the detective department, and removed to Howrah jail.' Sansees, Bhowrees, and other thieving communities known to past history still figure in the current record of crime.

Reports are now being received from the Bikaner and Marwar districts of police contentions with the Meenas, a tribe comprising whole families of robbers, in whom the profession has been hereditary, and of the misconduct of certain *Thakoors* (some of them men of position), in that quarter, who derive regular incomes from 'conniving at, and even encouraging, the practice.

The art of coining, being peculiarly adapted to the genius of a people celebrated for handicraft, is of course ably represented, and Benares in the present day furnishes the following news :—

'Pundit Raghoonath Pershad, the city Inspector of Police, has very dexterously discovered a gang of coiners of counterfeit money, made of three-fourths of silver and one-fourth of copper. They have been found out to be residents of Mouzah Sawadpore, Furreedpore, Bheatah, Tarapore, Iradutpore, Saræma, &c. in the district of Futtehpore. They ac-

knowledge that their gang set out from their houses in the beginning of October, and went to various large cities, where they have been making counterfeit coins for circulation. They have been captured with moulds and all their apparatus. They used to make coins so nicely as to put them beyond the power of detection, but on analysis the mixture could be discovered. This band of coiners used to live at Juggut Gunj, Pisach, Mechon, and Bhudainee. Two of them confessed their deeds and showed the magistrate how they made them. These men will be made over to the sessions very soon. If the authorities at Futtehpoore would trace them all, then both Government and the public will be saved from a heavy loss.'

Then, further to complicate the evil, such native defaulters are wont to cloak their designs by the exercise of great craft and cunning. Idleness and poverty in India are largely associated with an inventive capacity, the creations of which are sometimes as ludicrous to contemplate as they are difficult to control. A poor old woman on crutches, for example, appears at the door of an English residence in Mirzapore. She is the widow of a deceased *zemindar* who once owned large estates, but who, through a series of misfortunes, lost all and left her in penury. The appearance and manner of this unhappy lady confirm the truth of her story, and she is about to receive assistance, when an unexpected *dénouement* occurs, on which she suddenly drops her supports, and bounding with astonishing agility into a rather handsome *hackrie* in waiting not far from the door, handles the reins in a style which renders pursuit needless. This *fellow* was a notorious thief and housebreaker.

Again, the wife of an office messenger in Madras observes with surprise the premature return home of her husband, who had been temporarily absent from duty. There could be no doubt of the fact: having come in and at once resumed his

uniform; there he was, with his back towards her, rummaging about the house for something he must have mislaid. Yet, as it turned out, this was an interloper, who, aware of the husband's absence, had contrived to enter quietly and don the other's clothes, in which disguise he was attempting to rob the house ! The registries of judicial courts throughout the country comprise numerous similar cases of bold and ingenious knavery.

Unfortunately, however, such are not among the darkest scenes of lawless life in India. Between crime and cruelty there is a natural connection, which here manifests itself in deeds of horror contrived with fiendish ingenuity. So much, at least, may be said of the trade carried on by some *Chamars* in poisoning cattle. The *Chamar* is a dealer in hides (which it will be observed form an item in the export trade of the country), and in remote districts, where the nefarious practice referred to chiefly prevails, is sometimes the *employé* of larger dealers in the business marts, by whom he is furnished with money advanced for the purpose of procuring supplies. Thus situated, there are individuals of the class whose sole aim in life it becomes to collect hides in large quantities by fair means or foul. They accordingly sprinkle poison over the pasture on which animals are feeding, or with a sharp poisoned awl prick them in a tender part, watching the poor victims with malignant eyes while they suddenly fall dead, or linger through days of agony. The infamous deed of destruction once consummated, a bargain on advantageous terms is readily effected with the outraged and bewildered proprietor.

A volume issued this year by Dr. Mouat, Inspector-general of Prisons, may be welcomed as unveiling the extraordinary

habits of some of the criminal classes both Hindoo and Mahomedan. The field of investigation was probably found by the learned inspector to be of a richer and more varied character than all his previous knowledge of the subject had led him to suppose. He tells us of entire sects and communities devoted each to its particular part in the drama of crime. There are *Dosadhs*, who employ their time and wits, in ferreting out the whereabouts of accessible property. If the coveted possession be cattle in the fields, these miscreants obtain the assistance of the *Gwallas* (who are specially expert in the capture of live stock) to secure such booty; if it be rupees in a safe, a band of trained cracksmen, devoted to the office of opening lockfast places, is employed. There are *Rujwars*, who are willing to work when employment is at hand, but who otherwise roam abroad in the capacity of dacoits and burglars. Gipsy *Nuts* wander from place to place, appropriating any petty article on which they can lay hands. Fairs and bazaars are haunted by quiet, meek-looking *Cheyne*s, provided with sharp little knives, wherewith, after a fashion infinitely insinuating and gentle, they cut open pockets and *cummerbunds* where purses are usually kept. *Burryars* or *Sindhya*s, burrowing under ground, come up noiselessly through the floor of a house, and having possessed themselves of anything worth taking away, not excepting, perchance, the ring (softly removed by means of a file) from the nose of slumbering beauty, glide away as silently as they came, leaving no other memorial of their visit than the passage by which it had been effected!

Such a matured and complicated system of rascality must be regarded as the hideous offspring of ignorance and poverty

goaded into action by tyranny and misrule. While the country was being despoiled of its wealth and industrial resources, for the purpose of sustaining the inflated fabric of the empire, the oppressed and needy combined to help themselves, racking their ingenuity for the means of acquiring a livelihood. The priesthood, as a rule, avoiding inconvenient distinctions, sanctified any act which happened to suit their ends; and the result has been a terribly confused condition of society, presenting aspects more wild and monstrous than the ordinary creations of fiction.

At Lucknow we met a young officer whose short residence in the country had apparently only served to reveal to him the dark side of the native character, as represented by lawless habits like those I have been describing. He was, indeed, one of a class of Englishmen in India who, to judge from their conversation, would seem always to be possessed with the notion that the Hindoo idiosyncrasy is an ethnical horror, literally and exclusively compounded of the elements of wickedness. 'Would you believe it,' he said one evening, 'that these scoundrels of Hindoos have attempted to steal the very bed from under me!' While travelling northwards alone in the autumn of the previous year, his *gharry* had been delayed for a time at a solitary station during the night, in order that the wheels might be greased. All was quiet, and the fatigued traveller sank into slumber, but presently awoke to the consciousness of a cold sensation and a strange gentle motion as if the vehicle were slowly slipping away from beneath him. The action proceeded at irregular intervals, and in perfect silence. At length, opening his eyes, he perceived to his horror

and surprise, that not the *gharry*, but the *bed-mat* on which he lay, was gradually leaving him by the partially open door, and emerging into the darkness like a thing of life. Soon, however, his waking thoughts divined the cause of this provoking disturbance. Cautiously turning his head, he observed by the star-light the black hand and arm of the rascal, who, concealed behind the vehicle, was thus actually engaged in the attempt to 'steal the very bed from under him.' Then, nerved by a paroxysm of tremendous indignation, it was the work of a moment to collect all his energy and make a swift dash at the arm. He caught it readily, full in his grasp; but, alas! the thievish limb had been too well prepared for such a contingency. It slipped through his eager clutch like an eel in deep water, leaving him, as a sweet memorial of the contact, *a hand ful of rancid 'ghee'!*

In the returns to which I have adverted, it will be seen that the 'village police' greatly preponderate in number—a result naturally arising from the circumstances of the country. These are a peculiar set of functionaries, to whose discretion and sense of duty much more is necessarily entrusted in outlying districts than all one's knowledge of their claim to these qualities might seem to warrant. They are generally reported to be extremely fond of enacting, in their several subordinate spheres of rule, the comedy of high life below stairs. Some, however, are men of importance in their way—landed proprietors to wit—for in reality these *chokydars* are of two kinds, one maintained by the village householders, and the other by an assignment of service lands. The latter, called *ghatwals*, are in themselves a creation of the Mahomedan

government, and were first instituted for the purpose of defending the passes which abound in hilly regions, a portion of land being awarded them by way of remuneration. The system, however, it may be added, belongs to the old institutions of India; and the principle of assigning *ghatwalee* lands in return for personal service exists in connection with other protective measures, such as defence against river pirates and *dacoits*. It is interesting to note how nearly this ancient method of Indian land tenure resembles the feudal system which originally prevailed in our own country, where the vassal in most cases held his land by military service to be rendered to his lord.

It is upwards of thirty years since Lord Macaulay first gave an impetus to the question of prison reform in India. Since that period the legislature has striven to cope with the magnitude of the task, and to bring its arrangements into harmony with the ethnological distinctions of the people. More recently, an Inspector-General of Prisons has been appointed to each of the Provincial Governments. In jails and reformatories the books are kept, and the interior economy is regulated as nearly as possible on the English plan. Nothing could better confirm the conclusion, that mere brutish ignorance is the fruitful source of Brahminical influence among the peasantry than the statistical details furnished by these establishments. Of the 67,037 individuals, for example, admitted to prison in 1867, under the Bengal administration, it was found that 154 were fairly educated for their sphere in life, and that 5,150 had a very slight acquaintance with reading, while all the rest, numbering 61,733, were in a condition of crass ignorance!

Heavy labour, such as the crank and wheel supply, not being

suited to the Bengalee physique, a variety of the lighter industrial employments have been introduced into these reformatories, with such success, in some cases, as to leave a remuneration to the Government.

I associate this subject of crime and criminals with Agra, because we had there an opportunity of inspecting the famous convict prison, then under the superintendence of Dr. Walker, who himself politely conducted us over the establishment. We found it to comprise a series of separate buildings with court-yards between, all remarkably clean and pervaded by that air of order and repose which bespeaks a thorough system of regulation. There were then no fewer than 3,000 persons within the walls, all variously employed upon some useful work. About 600 were engaged in the several processes of paper-making, and the remainder in weaving cloth or blankets, letter-press printing, and other serviceable occupations. In fact, all the Post Office printing of Oude and the North-West was being executed in this place. Several notorious dacoits were pointed out to us sullenly pursuing their work. One of these, who had been the terror of the neighbourhood for years previous to his capture, especially claimed our attention. Nor did the appearance of the man belie his history, as he crouched on the floor beside us, pushing with thick brawny arms a heavy iron roller over something intended to be smoothed; for the pair of fierce black eyes that gleamed furtively up at us from beneath a low knotted brow, plainly told that we were contemplating a caged tiger engaged upon an uncongenial task.

This institution was regarded as perhaps the most thorough of its class in India, although the same plan had previously

been followed in Allahabad, Meerut, and Bareilly. It would be difficult to imagine a system better adapted to the purpose intended—that of gathering in the stray *waifs* of Indian society, and subjecting their wayward and ferocious tendencies to the humanizing influence of well-regulated occupations. And so valuable everywhere is industry, contrived and directed by intelligence, that the desired boon was here obtained on extremely advantageous terms, Dr. Walker's establishment, as we were informed, being more than self-supporting.



CHAPTER XL.

MELANCHOLY CAWNPORE.

The morning passed, and Asia's sun rode up
In the clear heaven, and every beam was heat.—BRYANT.



CAWNPORE, as approached from the handsome railway terminus which constitutes its principal ornament, is a long straggling range of low brick buildings and mud huts, with doors of wicker work and plaited straw. In front of the row a canal furnished with locks extends to the Ganges, by which the city is bounded on the other side. This aqueduct is navigable by small boats, and became revealed to us as the resort of a lively throng of natives in the act of washing clothes, or simply disporting their persons in its filthy depths. The principal street, however, is a good one, built of brick houses, and the population, which a few years ago was estimated at 60,000, must now be considerably greater. For Cawnpore, however desolate in appearance, obtained a high prize in the distribution of railway gifts, and has already become the principal mart of commerce in the North-West. Though built on a hot sandy plain, and burning throughout the summer months with a temperature which sometimes

exceeds 140 degrees Fahr., it is, as the frontier station of Oude, the scene of an extensive military encampment, whole streets of canvass marking the site of the cantonments, which of themselves cover an area of about ten square miles, and comprise a population of not fewer than 50,000 souls. There is now quite a bustle of shipping and of arriving and departing passengers at the *ghaut* or landing-place, whence the Ganges is



CAWNPORE.

navigable 1,000 miles in the seaward direction, and 300 miles up country. Ludicrous-looking vessels of native build crowd the river — *budgerows*, with the stern elevated high above the bow — light *pansways*, uncouth *bauleahs*, and huge hulking craft like floating hayricks — all actively engaged in lading or unlading goods and produce. The bazaars, too, have grown into busy thoroughfares, as the principal rendezvous of the dealers in Upper India, and are well stocked with shirtings, grey and white, from

Manchester, and Turkey red cloths from Glasgow, together with printed garments, scarfs, *sarees*, and other British imports passing through Calcutta. Cawnpore also possesses a new, and for these parts an uncommon, element of industry in the Elgin cotton-spinning and weaving mills, equipped with excellent machinery of modern construction, and daily thrumming with the play of a considerable productive power, though with what advantage I cannot tell otherwise than by quoting the report of the 'Public Intelligence,' which, in a recent number, notices a good demand for the cloth, though not for the thread, of the Elgin mills. A further sign of material prosperity at Cawnpore is, that, in the fruitful period of the year, the soil of the surrounding country is rendered extremely fertile, the gardens and their products being reckoned among the finest in India.

But in spite of these advantages this city of sad memories remains as it ever was, in the dry season, a spectacle of territorial desolation. As such, indeed, Cawnpore is celebrated not only in the story of the Mutiny but in the annals of internecine strife; the battles that have here found their issue in the effects of the blinding sand, being one of the most curious phases of Indian history.

The town, as we approached it, seemed to be set in a desert, only relieved by the green foliage of the trees, which drew their sustenance from depths beyond the reach of the blighting sunshine, and shed cooling shadows on the heated surface of the soil. The Fort, a small square building glistening in the strong light, the English church of Gothic design, and the military barracks, were pleasant objects enough, as were also the neat white-cast habitations of the English residents visible in the distance,

and gleaming among rich shrubbery, though surrounded with mud walls. But these were only a few fresh tints in the faded picture; the general appearance of the place was as sad and dreary as the story of its woes.

It was thus with the effect of devastating an already blasted soil that the Mutiny raged and rioted at Cawnpore. The scorched earth for some distance from the town was covered with ruins and excavations, among which appeared the remains



OLD WELL OF CAWNPORE.

of those entrenchments so famous in the story of the conflict. Over this scene of destruction, strewn with loose stones, broken barrels, and crumbling embankments, floated some filthy white kites with ruffled feathers, and a number of carrion crows, on the apparently hopeless quest for food. Around us a few lean native figures rested on the ground, or listlessly pursued their way. In the distance, on one side, a long row of camels were slowly stalking across the blighted plain; above the town,

on the other, rose the black time-worn peaks of its execrable temples ; and, as an example of its holiday delights, we could perceive, issuing from one of the main thoroughfares, the active agents in a marriage display, bearing tattered flags and raising discordant sounds.

Such were then, and to some extent still are, the surroundings



WELL OF CAWNPORE, AS IT IS.

of the Well of Cawnpore, with its 'great company of Christian people, chiefly women and children,'—an object now beautiful in itself but occupying a terrible page in history. Three solitary palm trees, to which we had been directed as indicating the site of the well, grew at the foot of the embankment. The native masons then engaged in the work of construction, were plying

little mallets and chisels with an amount of energy suggestive of the national prejudice against over-fatigue. On the walks within



INTERIOR OF WELL AT CAWNPORE.

the circular space, which had newly been formed, a couple of

bheesties, each laden with his uncouth burden, were employed in laying the dust; and a staff of gardeners, bending over the sandy soil, were occupied with the task of making the desert bloom. The result of this combined action has been the creation of a winged female figure, bearing the 'martyrs' holy palms,' enclosed by a screen of exquisitely carved stone work, and occupying the centre of a beautiful garden in the surrounding waste. It seems almost a pity to add, that the art critics of the North-West blame Baron Marochetti for the expressionless character of the angel's face, while the lovely oasis surrounding it is essentially artificial, and can only be preserved so long as there are gardeners and *bheesties* at hand to counteract, by ceaseless labour, the blighting influence of nature in that arid region.

The landlord of the hotel where we passed the night had good reason to remember the well, a brother and two sisters having been among the number of the terror-stricken group of fugitives who were fired upon by the perfidious Nana Sahib in the escape boat, and afterwards consigned to those depths over which the angel presides. This man was a half-cast, and fond of recounting his tale of woe. His eyes were heavy and sad, his voice lugubrious and low; the inmost depths of his being seemed to be penetrated by the prevailing melancholy of the place. On the same evening we concluded that, what with desolation out of doors and dulness within, there was nothing to detain us in Cawnpore.

Leaving for Lucknow in the morning we crossed the Ganges on a primitive bridge of boats, sustaining tiny dwellings formed of reeds and branches on their elevated prows, the creaking swaying passage itself being occasionally blocked up with troops

of gaily dressed riders mingled with dust-covered coolies bearing unimaginable burdens to supply the multifarious wants of Cawnpore. On the sandy flat at the other end of the bridge, houses of wood and cane gave shelter to a community of bargemen and hucksters, together with water nymphs, whose apparel conveniently suited the several avocations in which they were engaged among the pools that encompassed their dwellings, and the possession of which was disputed with them by a number of



GHAUT ON THE GANGES WHERE NANA SAHIB FIRED ON THE ESCAPE BOAT.

waterfowl, either floating about luxuriously, or standing upright on tall thin legs, intently contemplating the proceedings. Was sport proscribed, or were sportsmen wanting in the environs of Cawnpore, that such immunity existed for these feathered sentinels of the stream ?

The railway not being then open to Lucknow (distant fifty-three miles), this portion of our journey was also allotted to the unwelcome *gharry*. Now, however, a pleasant prospect lay be-


fore us. Beyond the vicinity of Cawnpore the country assumed an aspect of rich luxuriance, for the spring was advancing, and Oude is one of the fairest provinces of India. Fields of linseed and barley, apparently interminable, lay like rich emerald carpets on the plain, which receded out of view to the horizon, where, with its trees and cattle, it melted into a picture of islands in a light blue sea. We had passed through a ruined gateway into a blooming domain.



CHAPTER XLI.

THE TALE OF LUCKNOW.

I built my soul a lordly pleasure house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.—TENNYSON.

N a few hours it became apparent that we were approaching a large city. The social respectability of Lucknow was manifested by the appearance on the road of gaily dressed horsemen and stylish little pony pavilions laden with figures, arrayed in Persian silks and Cashmere shawls.

Ample testimony to the piety of Lucknow was afforded by a large party of those brown-clad carriers of Hurdwar water, of whom I have already spoken, going in with supplies for the spiritual refreshment of its inhabitants; and its commercial importance was evidenced in the spectacle of strings of camels laden with merchandise, and driven by strong, tawdry Cabul men. Natives say that some of these huge denizens of the North, before setting out on their distant journey, record a vow that they will neither wash nor change their clothing till they return home. And truly their appearance does not tend to invalidate the statement.

As we drew near the city, the luxuriance of the country seemed to increase, until having reached the *Alumbagh* (or

Queen's Garden), which is situated in the outskirts, we could perceive its spires glistening above a luxuriance of vegetation, apparently too dense to afford a site for a village. But the *Alumbagh*, built as an abode of sensualism, had been transformed into a temple of fame; for there, fronting the entrance, stood the grave of Havelock. This once beautiful garden is at present, I believe, employed for the cultivation of grain and vegetables. It was then no more than a neglected compound surrounded by brick walls, which the strife of 1857 had partly destroyed. In the centre rose the large square mansion wherein the deliverer planned his attack, now charred and defaced by the action of artillery, the sunlight gleaming through its void windows, and flooding its deserted halls. A poor patch of *dhal*, sown in a solitary corner, was struggling through the barren soil, and together with a tope of mango trees, which had somehow escaped the devastation, formed the only oasis in a scene of ruin, where half-a-dozen lean kine, attended by a couple of children, were attempting the apparently impossible task of picking up a subsistence.

Such is the resting-place of Sir Henry Havelock, whose deeds, on which, as many will remember, the national anxiety hung with terrible suspense during the early period of the Mutiny, are recorded on a marble tablet affixed to the obelisk which surmounts the tomb. On that spot where he first stood, amidst a brave soldier band and the bristling accoutrements of war, the hero found a retired and solitary grave.

It has been variously stated that Lucknow is a more attractive city than Rome, Constantinople, or even Paris; but, for my own part, I cannot recognize in any of these places a sufficient

basis of comparison. To imagine some of the more ornate buildings of the three gathered together, adorned with a rich profusion of domes and columns, and planted at irregular intervals in a grove many miles in circumference, is perhaps to realize some notion of Lucknow, — so wide is the range of its magnificence, so very beautiful is that Indian city as seen from the vicinity of the river Goomtee, extending in a line of palaces four miles along the opposite bank. A nearer and truer acquaintance with this urban splendour, however, proves that distance had lent it enchantment by concealing some of the poorer features of the town; and it remains to be added that the more elaborate erections themselves are chiefly of the gewgaw order of architecture, being composed of brick white-cast with *chunam*, while the gilded cupolas flashing so grandly in the sunlight are in many cases but painted wooden shells. The destruction which overtook some of these palaces during the Mutiny, had the effect of sweeping away many of the filthy dens then clustered around them; and, as the spacious public thoroughfares have been more recently cleared and improved by the local government, Lucknow is, at the present day, a very attractive station, more so, indeed, than it was before the outbreak of those hostilities, the devastating marks of which it continues to exhibit.

Unlike other great Indian cities, Lucknow only belongs to modern history. A hundred years have not passed since it first rose into prominence as the residence of the Court of Oude. Time has not imparted to it the mouldering and obliterated aspect of such places as Delhi and Agra; it is still sufficiently young to be fresh and fair.

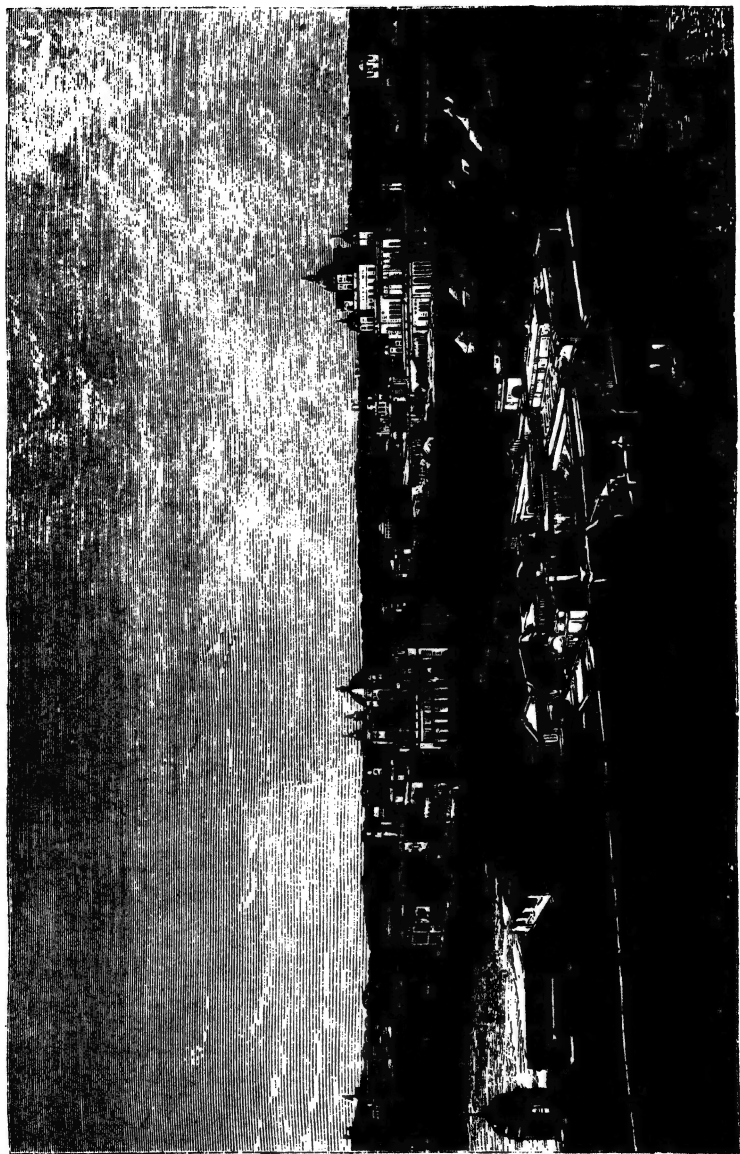
The record goes that the present city occupies the site of sixty-four villages which stood within the bounds of an ancient forest, where 60,000 *moonees*, or Hindoo saints, read their sacred books together and performed rigid acts of penance. History tells us, however, that Asf-o-dowla was the first of the Viziers who elevated Lucknow to the rank of a city and the dignity of a capital. On the accession of that prince in 1775, it was merely a large town comprising a few hundreds of houses of ordinary appearance; yet, in the comparatively short interval between that period and the time of annexation by the Marquis of Dalhousie, it had risen to the height of its splendour, and was computed to contain from 800,000 to 900,000 inhabitants—a number equal to the united populations of Delhi and Benares. Thus the volume describing the magnificence of Lucknow would be greater than that recording its history. An ephemeral city it may well be called; not that the revolution was so widely destructive of its masonry, nor that the elements have made unusual haste to tarnish its finery, but because it sprang rapidly into existence, served a short-lived purpose, and, in its capacity as a nucleus of grandeur, has no proper vocation now. The present population is estimated at about 300,000, the ranks of poverty and idleness having been happily thinned since the period of native rule.

Although, perhaps, some account in the form of a connected narrative of the city of Lucknow and its short-lived glory might not yet be altogether without interest to some readers, I need scarcely say that I have no such purpose in view. Others, indeed, may deem the subject in any form somewhat too trite. But in the course of a very short allusion to the principal features of

this remarkable creation of royal vanity, I will endeavour only to record my own impressions, and to avoid, except where a mere allusion may be necessary, recalling the statements of history. Let it be understood, however, that my remarks are offered apart from architectural details of which I possess no knowledge.

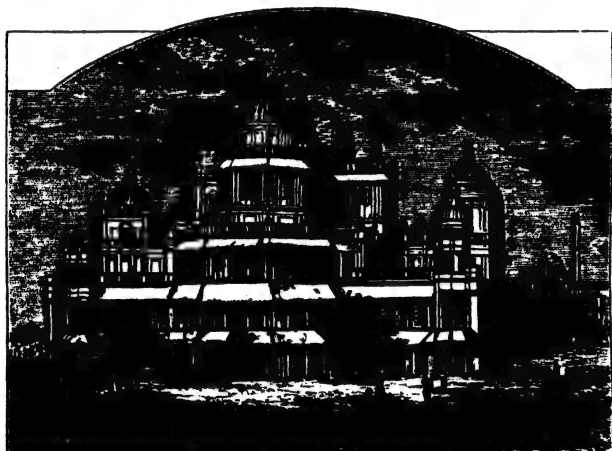
There are at present several hotels in Lucknow, although at the period of our visit there happened to be no other house of public accommodation than the '*dâk* bungalow,' towards which accordingly our *gorriwallah* drove in dashing style through devious ways and crowds of observant natives. Such a *dâk* house had not hitherto fallen to our lot. This was no paltry hovel of the plains but a stately mansion, consisting of large lofty apartments with gilded walls and ceilings—the quondam abode of a royal lady of Lucknow. The *cuisine* and attendance also being in conformity with this external superiority, we were here lodged in comparatively regal splendour.

It was something to say that there were giants in Patna, but a faithful account of my experiences first demands from me the comparatively insignificant statement that there are sparrows in Lucknow. The multitudinous chorus of chirping which awoke me in the early morning imbued my dreamy senses with the idea that I had been sleeping in the open air. In another moment, however, I beheld the flock, not disporting among green boughs or perched on overhanging eaves, for nothing of the kind was visible from my pillow, but in full possession of the ornate broken roof of our bedchamber, flying from hole to corner, and appearing or vanishing through rents in tarnished gilt vases and faded garlands of roses. Strangely enough, as the sequel will show, no more appropriate symbol of life in Lucknow could have ushered in the day.



CITY OF LUCKNOW.

We had arranged that the *khitmagar* should procure a comfortable carriage for our tour of inspection in the morning, and after breakfast found our conveyance at the door—a strange vehicle resembling a long wooden box on wheels, and so flimsily constructed, that, while moving, it creaked and oscillated in a manner suggestive of an immediate breakdown. The *gorri-wallah* however, having in reply to my remonstrance assured



THE KAISERBAGH.

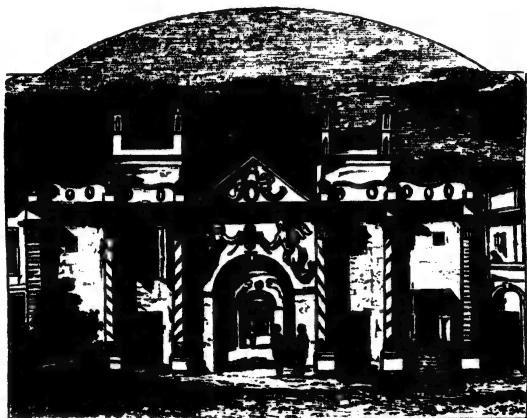
us there was not a better carriage in Lucknow, Gophall took his place on the roof, and we set forth to begin our round of observation with the Kaiserbagh in the vicinity of our dwelling. The kings of Oude having adopted the title of Cæsar, the name of this celebrated erection literally interpreted is Cæsar's palace. It was, as many Lucknow citizens will remember, completed by the ex-king Wajid Ali Shah in 1850, and is said to have cost no less a sum than 800,000/. On entering, we

traversed a series of high walled courts, shut in with huge gates of brass, on which were delineated a variety of richly-wrought objects, including figures of mermaids with wings (such being the device of some Queen's crest) and of fish tied to flowers with a string. These yards were crowded with diminutive temples and fanciful dwellings, prominent among which appeared the Badshah Munzil, for some time a favourite residence of the king, and the Chundiwalli Baradarri, once paved with silver. Passing at length through the celebrated Luckhee Gate (erected at the estimated cost of a lac of rupees, and hence its name), we emerged into the grand square of the Kaiserbagh—a scene of wonderful architectural beauty and extent, surrounded by palatial buildings with massive pillars and sculptured terraces, the great court itself being ornamented throughout with a gorgeous variety of fountains, pagodas, watercourses, and elevated platforms surmounted by gilded spires.

In this magnificent quadrangle dwelt the ex-king of Oude with his crowd of wives, constituting a picture of supreme connubial splendour, if not of high domestic felicity. But now some of the gorgeous buildings were deserted. Windows which had let in the light on the toilette mysteries of royal boudoirs were smashed and broken, displaying empty apartments with the blue sky beyond. At others, however, sat such interlopers as gentlemen of our Indian Civil Service with their wives and families, looking forth with a universally unmoved expression on the regal waste below, while, in order to utilize this deserted zenana, the public road which formerly wound round it by a long detour, now ran right through the centre, and thus divided in twain the glories of the Kaiserbagh. I have to add, however, that the talookdars, whose property it became by the gift of Lord Canning, have lately

repaired the waste, and converted the place into a range of comfortable dwelling-houses.

Close at hand, with its gilt semicircle glittering in the strong light, stood the Kaiser Pusuna, which the late king confiscated from the vizier of a former ruler, and which attracts a melancholy interest as the place where, during the Mutiny, the Dhowrera company of prisoners were confined previous to being led forth to execution.



GATEWAY OF THE KAISERBAGH.

We next visited the Chutter Munzil, erected by the second king of Oude, who seems to have left no other reputation behind him than that of an idle voluptuary. This palace served as a separate residence for the ladies of the harem, and its name is derived from the canopy representing a circle of gilt umbrellas which crowns the so-called golden dome. It is now, I understand, occupied partly as a club-house and partly by civil offices. Minutely elaborate in design, and comprising four highly

ornate balconies, the Chutter Munzil resembles in its general outline nothing that I can imagine of European handiwork more nearly than that highly artistic production, a handsome wedding cake. From the upper stage we obtained a splendid view of the neighbourhood. On one side was the Kaiserbagh and its ramifications, forming the foreground of a picture which melted into a view of mingled trees and towers : on the other we looked down on the Goomtee, a narrow blue river sparkling with sunshine and winding out of sight into the distant landscape. The Goomtee is spanned by three bridges, one constructed of stone in 1780 ; another of iron, the material for which was brought more recently from England ; and the third, one of those bridges of boats peculiar to the country. The stillness pervading the fine rural prospect extended below, seemed to be intensified by the silent motion of the few canoe-shaped boats which glided along with the current, and was only broken by a constant slapping sound (mellowed into softness by the height of our position) produced by the washermen of Lucknow, whose figures, diminutive in the distance, were discernible on the brink of the stream, beating heavy cloths on stones. Before us lay the Motee Mahul which Sadut Ali built about the beginning of the present century, taking for his design the curve of a pearl, and within whose walls Lucknow royalty, after the fashion of ancient Rome, was wont to regale itself with the stirring spectacle of wild beast fights ; the Khoorshid Munzil, or House of the Sun, with its four spires, set apart for the very different and much more seasonable purpose of a retirement in the hour of regal affliction ; and the Tarrawallie Kothie, or Observatory, in front of which were massacred the poor English captives sent in by the rebel

rajahs. The existence of this last edifice must be held to redeem in some measure the worthless memory of the second king of Oude, by whom it was founded under the superintendence of Colonel Wilcox, the astronomer royal, who died in 1847, leaving it well provided with astronomical instruments. These, however, were either lost or stolen during the rebellion, and no telescope or astro-scope incommoded the movements of the gallant brigade major and his family whose dwelling for the



BRIDGE NEAR LUCKNOW.

time this temple of science had become. It was afterwards converted into an office for the Bank of Bengal; a purpose indicative of material progress among the fading glories of Lucknow, which I presume it continues to fulfil. The Koorshid Munzil, at the time of our visit, was the elegant residence of the officer commanding Her Majesty's forces in Lucknow; and concerning the Motee Mahul, my last information was to the effect that its splendours served to adorn a female seminary.

The appearance presented by the Residency was eloquent of the tragic story with which it is associated. The buildings were smashed and broken, the walls indented with bullets, and the ground strewn with tumuli of earth and stones. Where once bloomed the garden of the Bailey Guard, a few goats were feeding on a plot of thin grass—all that remained of its luxuriance—and some native children, whom rent walls were of course powerless to exclude, romped among the fragments of a once highly ornamental fountain. This scene of devastation was appropriately overlooked by the blank windows of the Residency, which, in its turn, had become the abode of a new class of tenants, for through what remained of the lower doorways we could perceive in one corner the hind-quarters of a cow. These chambers, having served their day as the offices of Sir Henry Lawrence, were now in use as a byre!

As for the chief actors in the defence, we traced out their names in a little cemetery hard by—a solitary spot surrounded by brick walls, but in trim order and adorned with flower-beds overhung by weeping willows. The place was quite crowded with plain gravestones inscribed with the names and sad end of officers who fell during the rebellion, or perished afterwards through suffering and fatigue. Among these memorials of course appeared the tombs of Brigadier General Neill and Major Banks, together with that of one of the noblest men ever connected with the Indian Government—Sir Henry Lawrence—of whom, in his own words, it is simply but eloquently recorded on the stone, that he ‘tried to do his duty.’

From the Residency it is only a short distance by the direct road to the Muchee Bawn, or Fort of Lucknow, an extensive

series of defences, including the ancient fortress of that name, which was considered impregnable 200 years ago. 'According to an old proverb, he who holds the Muchee Bawn holds Lucknow' is the testimony of a pamphlet styled 'A Brief History of Lucknow,' which I procured there, and to which I am indebted for a few particulars included in this sketch.



RUINS OF THE RESIDENCY.

The 'old proverb' referred to, however, seems only worth recalling now as indicating what a different place Lucknow must have been at the period when an inconsiderable building within the present fort, 'noticeable for its round earthen bastions,' was sufficient to command the entire city, compared with that memorable day, the 1st of July 1857, when the whole Muchee Bawn of modern times was evacuated by its gallant little

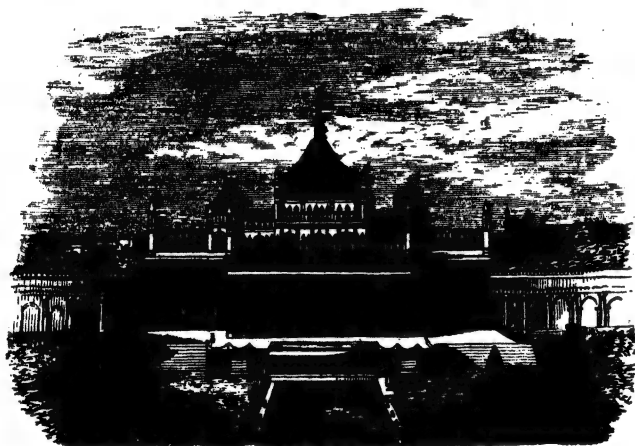
garrison, who, after successfully destroying its defences, fled for succour to the Residency.



GRAVES OF NEILL AND LAWRENCE.

Our next stage was the great Imambarra, the crowning work of Asf-o-dowla's reign, and correctly styled the 'architectural

gem of Lucknow.' It is said that the Nawab's only stipulation with Kyfeet-ool-lah, the successful candidate among the competing architects, was that the building should be entirely original in style, and surpass in splendour any other of the kind in existence. And who will make bold to say, that Kyfeet-ool-lah failed in the task thus confided to him? The grand pile of the Imambarra, as delineated in the woodcut below, rises from



THE GREAT IMAMBARRA.

a terrace in the centre of a spacious court, which is enriched with a finely tessellated pavement, and surrounded by matchless Saracenic walls and gateways.

Near this building, and greatly magnifying the architectural grandeur of the view, stands the Roomie Durwaza or Turkish gate, which, as the record states, was constructed after the model of a gate in Constantinople, and which, regarded as an appendage to the Imambarra, forms a gilded exterior porch of extraordinary

magnificence. It appears, however, that the architect of the Roomie Durwaza, while more than emulating his supposed Turkish model as regards the element of beauty, altogether failed in that of similitude. The great hall of the Imambarra, measuring 167 feet long, is even now considered one of the finest in the world. It is richly embellished within, having also ornate verandahs on both sides, and a handsome apartment at either end.

Little did the ambitious builder of the Imambarra, the Nawab Vizier, who vouchsafed but scant allegiance to the Imperial Cabinet of Delhi—little did he dream, as he gazed with pride on this ‘crowning work of his reign,’ on which we are told he spent a million sterling, that he had been providing noble barracks and a storehouse for the troops of the Infidel! Yet such was the admirable purpose to which the great Imambarra (still an arsenal) was devoted, and that of course with more than sufficiency of accommodation. The rich, checkered courts were further ornamented with the scarlet uniform of British soldiers, and echoed, as it so happened at the moment, with the sound of their bugle call. But the grand hall itself had undergone a still greater transformation. Its many shining mirrors and crystal chandeliers (one of them constructed for 100 wax candles), which, indeed, had been broken up or carried off ere Sir Colin Campbell took possession of the place, were now replaced by a large and varied store of more useful and less brittle materials—the implements and accoutrements of war.

Close at hand rose the towers of the Jumna Musjid, or Grand Mosque, an erection of the usual kind. As a military guard held the entrance door, the Musjid was evidently in use for some other end than the celebration of Mohammedan rites. It

had, in fact, as we found on enquiry, been turned to account as a *prison house*, and doubtless a fine airy jail it was, consisting not of such a series of cribs as we are apt to associate with the abode of law breakers, but of one spacious apartment with a huge overarching dome.

In this vicinity also stands the Hoseinabad Imambarra, erected by Mahomed Ali Shah, third king of Oude. The Hoseinabad, like other buildings of its class, is shut in by high walls, but can scarcely claim any greater admiration than may be accorded to a great exhibition of glass ware and general curiosity shop. The large hall inside is literally crammed with an array of many-coloured crystal globes, lanterns, and candelabra, in the midst of which stands the king's silver throne ; and the court without is a similarly crowded scene of gaudy little buildings with gilded spires (including a rather poor representation of the Taj at Agra), intermingled with dusty trees and puny garden plots. The centre is occupied by several marble fountains, together with a reservoir spanned by a neat iron bridge. To render the Hoseinabad a great glittering show was evidently the single aim of its founder. The railings in the quadrangle are pointed with brass, the windows are richly stained, doors and walls glare with bright-painted hues, and every available nook or corner is the receptacle of a lamp. Thus prepared to shine when lit up in celebration of great Mahommedan festivals, the Hoseinabad Imambarra, in the palmy days of Lucknow, was wont to glow and sparkle in a style that gladdened the eyes of the Sheeahs of the Mohurrum. Such is the place of the third king's sepulture, as well as that of his mother, whom he chose to bury among these evidences of his regal ostentation.

But it appears that Mahomed Ali had been ambitious to build

a mosque larger than the Jumna Musjid. His death in 1841 interrupted the progress of the work, and here it stood near the Hoseinabad, in a half-completed state, surrounded by heaps of rubbish—a huge misshapen mass of masonry and scaffolding gradually rotting away. Now the bulky but pitiful and unseemly object referred to is all the more memorable to us that it was the scene of a lively episode in the round of our inspection. At this waste spot the boy, who was acting in the capacity of our *syce*, thoughtlessly conducted the horse at a trot round a sharp, rough corner of the road, and crash! over went our crazy vehicle on its side with a brittle, crackling sound like the breaking of lath! Strange to say, not the slightest injury ensued to us who were within. The right-hand window had now become a skylight, out of which I made haste to emerge, helping forth, with the energy of fear for her safety, my frightened better-half. This indeed was the work of a moment, and having gained our feet, we found our fellow-sufferers from this catastrophe arranged in befitting positions like the figures of a stage scene. Our guide, in great excitement, was holding down the head of the horse, needlessly indeed, for the poor animal, also unhurt, evidently found its new position a relief; the old *gorriwallah* was on his knees, supplicating with clasped hands our forgiveness, for what he volubly assured us was no fault of his; and Gophall, more frightened than hurt, with flushed face and disarranged turban, stood like a statue of terror on a mound of stones, whereon he had been pitched clean and clear from the smooth roof of the gharry! The boy alone was wanting, but his retreating figure was visible at some distance, making a spasmodic effort to escape the punishment which he somehow considered

the natural consequence of this misadventure, so far as he himself was concerned. Thus wrecked among ruins, under a fiery Indian sun which no lady unaccustomed to such excessive heat could with impunity encounter, we thankfully retreated within the shadow projected by the ponderous mass of Mahomed Ali's unfinished Musjid; and so, miserable waste as it was, we were no longer open to the conviction that it had been built in vain. Here, during the half hour which elapsed ere another conveyance could be brought, we found nothing to interest us save the ridiculous spectacle of a couple of Lucknow ladies, whose high-caste modesty demanded their personal concealment, carried past us, each in a close basket of wicker-work, sustained on two bamboo poles, with a semi-nude figure at either end.

We had afterwards reason to know, however, that the women of Lucknow were not all living under the thrall of an etiquette so idle and absurd; for we found some of them engaged in an industrial occupation, which even afforded the advantages of fresh air and exercise, that, namely, of assisting in the erection of a handsome English church then being built in one of the principal thoroughfares. Here their forms, all alike clad from head to foot in wrappers of dark-coloured cloth, were mingled with those of the other sex, aloft on the roof of the building, or sliding down and toiling up gangways and steep planks, carrying stones and sand for the masons. These women, we were told, earned at the rate of two to three annas (3*d.* to 4½*d.*) per day, the payment of ordinary workmen being four to five annas, and that of foremen eight annas. Such a tariff of wages, compared with our own, shows that the rulers of Lucknow, like the kings of the Old World, had the advantage of economy

in the prosecution of their ambitious schemes, and could rear an imposing pile at a comparatively trifling cost so far as manual work was concerned. The extraordinary cheapness and abundance of labour indeed manifestly accounts, to some extent, for the existence of so many huge masonic structures scattered over the surface of North-Western India. These ineffectual sources of employment have had their day, and the toiling millions are obtaining better wages and more regular occupation in the new fields of productive industry which have been opened up side by side with these mouldering records of misspent toil.

The places we had been visiting were connected by wide handsome roads, which, as I have said, had been further improved during the strife of the rebellion, when many unseemly incumbrances were removed. Yet these fine broad highways do not represent all the healthful 'lungs' of this elegant city. Between the Secunder Bagh—a high-walled garden built by the last king for one of his wives whose name it bears—and the Nujeef Ashruf—an edifice with a great white dome, the work and tomb of the first king—both memorable spots in the relief of Lucknow, lie the fine gardens of the Agri-Horticultural Society of Oude. These are bounded on one side by the picturesque windings of the Goomtee, and contain among other inviting features some peculiarly good specimens of tropical birds. Another resort of the residents is Wingfield Park, an extensive enclosure, comprising wide carriage drives and walks shaded by rich foliage. This place is rendered further attractive by a fine collection of deer, and is maintained in excellent order by a large staff of assistants. Nor would it be fair, in the record of Lucknow, to omit mention of the excellent benevolent institutions

from which it derives more honour than many palaces can confer. Among these are a 'Lunatic Asylum,' a 'Refuge for the Poor,' a 'Lock Hospital,' and a 'King's Hospital,' where the indigent patient receives medical advice gratis. The Chinka Bazaar is a wide street of good shops, with a massive gateway at either end; but otherwise the native quarters, like similar nuclei of life elsewhere in India, consist mainly of houses constructed of mud, matting, and bamboo. Indeed the so-called glory of Lucknow being no more than an empty show, departed with its Mogul-appointed rulers; and the population has been diminishing year by year.

It now only remained to inspect the eastern portion of the city, where two principal objects of attraction are situated. At the extremity stood the Dilkoosha, or Heart's Delight, erected by Sadat Ali as a 'hunting box' and country residence. A handsome 'box' this was, flanked with gilt-tipped towers, and ornamented with two rows of brass balls which glistened in the sunlight like a double frontlet of gold. The Dilkoosha looked all the fairer from the fresh contrast it presented to the surrounding waste. The fine trees of the once beautiful park had been cut down for firewood, and of course the game was no longer there. In front stretched the arid plain by which we had approached, and, behind, a mingled scene of grove, field, and jungle extended to the horizon. The charming Dilkoosha, where Sadut Ali and his ladies were wont to meet and make merry, would have been the centre of a lifeless and silent scene but for the ravens which were circling round its shining globes, and the mellow sound of a bugle call that floated up for a moment from the cantonments some distance below.

Opposite, and not far from, the Dilkosha stands that large fantastic erection, the Martinière, otherwise called Constantia, built by the French soldier whose name it bears. The local pamphlet states, that the Nawab Vizier offered Claude Martin a million sterling for the building. We know, however, that the general himself did not live to witness its completion, but left funds sufficient for that purpose, together with the much more admirable provision of a college for promoting general education, to be established within its walls. It was a curious fancy which prompted this benevolent Frenchman to direct that the Martinière should become his own place of interment 'as a precaution to prevent any future ruler from confiscating it.' He did not imagine the possibility of his poor bones being violently assailed and scattered about the precincts of their tomb. Such, however, was one of the incidents of the Mutiny when the Constantia was sacked for plunder, although we are told that a portion of the general's remains were afterwards recovered and restored to their resting-place.

The interior of this building, like its outward form, is an indescribable architectural jumble, and is subdivided into a labyrinth of passages and staircases. Around the spacious class-rooms, which alone claim notice, were arranged a collection of excellent illustrative diagrams in botany, zoology, ornithology, geology, and astronomy, together with charts for facilitating the study of history and natural philosophy. Here, undoubtedly, was a well-spring of knowledge in the moral desert of Oude. In a country where spells and amulets blessed by the priesthood are hung up in the houses of the people, what were these illuminated scrolls on the walls of the Martinière class-rooms but counter charms,

consecrated by wisdom and destined to prevail through the witchery of truth ?

It thus appeared that the education here provided for the native youth of Lucknow, chiefly through the liberality of General Martin, embraced the whole round of the sciences. The classes, as one of the masters informed us, were then conducted by five European, assisted by three native, teachers, and attended by about 150 pupils young and old.

The top of the edifice is decorated with a hollow dome, and from the second terrace rise four towers ; while at the entrance gate crouch the figures of two enormous lions, which, with heads constructed for the reception of lighted lamps, are rendered terrible on suitable occasions, and guard the Constantia with eyes of fire.

From the upper terrace an uninterrupted prospect of the city and surrounding country is obtained. Standing amidst a heterogeneous crowd of life-size mythological figures, we feasted our eyes for a little on that magnificent panorama—one side representing a great level solitude of field and grove fading into the distant horizon—the other a foreground of courts and palaces, merging into an array of gleaming spires intermingled with rich foliage.

We had thus spread out around us as much as the eye could take in of the celebrated province of Oude, the soil of which abounding in crops of rice, opium, cotton, wheat, barley, hemp, and mustard, is regarded as perhaps the richest in India. This province is also famed for its teeming gardens of fruits, among which are the mango, the tamarind, and the banyan ; and for

its extensive forests of wild beasts, including the elephant, tiger, rhinoceros, wolf, and hyena.

According to the last 'Oude Administration Report,' the country is now entirely at peace, the number of persons licensed to carry arms having been gradually reduced to 1833—a great revolution certainly, when it is considered that, during the Mutiny, the whole province was in rebellion, even the poorest ryots being armed. We learn also that the population, which was taken at 6,000,000 at the time of annexation, now exceeds 11,000,000, and that this is the most densely inhabited of the ten provinces of India.

Wajid Ali Shah, the late king, was known in Lucknow as a poet and a man of literary tastes, although otherwise abandoned to luxury and sloth. It was manifestly with no higher aim than self-indulgence that he built the Kaiserbagh, in the splendid seclusion of whose halls, amidst numerous wives and parasites, he dreamed the perilous hours away, forgetful of the duties and responsibilities of a throne.

All who are acquainted with Indian history will remember that when, in the beginning of January, 1856, our Government, through the instrumentality of the Marquis of Dalhousie, effected the annexation of Oude, the deposed king was allowed the munificent pension of twelve lacs of rupees (about 120,000*l.*) a year, and retired to a handsome residence, formerly the abode of Sir Lawrence Peel at Garden Reach, on the banks of the Hooghly, in the immediate neighbourhood of Calcutta, and the still nearer vicinity of Fort William. Here, no doubt, Wajid Ali gained the advantage of witnessing the nature and extent of our power, while *we* acquired the opportunity of observing

his actions. As a matter of course some semblance of a royal court was duly constituted at Garden Reach. The surrounding dwellings were bought up as opportunity occurred, and occupied by the followers and retainers of the ex-king. High dignitaries, wearing grave looks, and arrayed in the livery of former days, appeared one by one on the scene, to swell his retinue and to lend it importance. And so matters stand. True to the character he had acquired, the deposed monarch, immured among a collection of pigeons and other birds, and surrounded by many wives, is rarely visible in public ; but his attendants are among the Calcutta celebrities of whom I have spoken elsewhere, as coming forth at sundown to circulate on the Maidan.



CHAPTER XLII.

MERCANTILE MIRZAPORE.

Trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay.—JOHNSON.



AVING completed the tour of Lucknow in three days, we fixed our departure for the fourth morning, and then opened our eyes for the last time on the sparrows disporting in scarcely diminished strength among the effete splendours of the bed-chamber.

Finding one of the wheels of the gharry, which now presented itself at the door to convey us back to Cawnpore, secured with a rope, my companion positively declined to enter it, and after considerable delay another was procured. I mention the circumstance for behoof of others, as some *gorriwallahs* are heedless of danger, and this may have been a fortunate exchange, seeing that we were driven the whole way in a thoroughly reckless style, the vehicle creaking and oscillating like a ship at sea. The railway run from Cawnpore to Allahabad was thus delightful by comparison. We arrived on Saturday evening and remained over Sunday at the hotel, the landlord of which directed us to a small English church or meeting-house. There, in a quiet bright room, whose four plain white walls then en-

closed nearly all of Sunday worship that prevailed in Allahabad, we heard a sermon on the woes of exile addressed to a congregation in full experience of the situation. The heavy burden of the discourse, intensified by the fact so naturally present to our minds, that outside the door which shut in this little gathering, singing the psalms of David in a soft pathetic undertone, lay the shrines and temples of heathendom, served to invest the meeting with a solemn, almost mournful aspect, which the bright sunshine that shot through every crevice of the close Venetian blinds, and danced in luminous patches on the ceiling, was powerless to dispel.

On the following morning we crossed the Jumna on our way to Mirzapore, only pausing for a little to witness the *Mag Mela* gathering, of which I have spoken elsewhere. There being no horse *dik* at Gopeegunge, our next halting-place, we were supplied with a carriage and twelve to convey us thence to Mirzapore. In other words, our jaded quadruped was removed, and the gharry committed to a team of just a dozen coolies, by whom it was dragged over the remaining twelve miles of our journey. This was indeed a motley crew, such as we had never before encountered in close contact. Their plan of operations was simply to surround the vehicle, grasping it any where, and then to pull away with some attempt at concert—by turns moving on lazily, stopping stock-still, and running swiftly away with us in splendid stage-coach style; but never ceasing to shout and chatter, as if the energy thus expended were the mainspring of locomotion. Movements so fitful and erratic were utterly beyond control; all attempts, indeed, at direction or remonstrance, might as well have been addressed to the wind, and,

although often most needful, had invariably to be abandoned in despair. I have already explained that the ordinary clothing of the coolie consists of two pieces of cotton cloth, one compassing the head and the other the loins. It so happened, however, that the collective presence of this party was somewhat more dashing and respectable than usual, one man luxuriating in a pair of ancient slippers from which his toes protruded, while another was arrayed in nothing less (or more) than a military coat of scarlet, equally old and airy, that just clung to his meagre shoulders, and streamed behind him as he ran, like a gay pennant floating in honour of our progress. The troop considered themselves amply rewarded with a few annas each for their long, arduous exertion in the heat of the day; so that those who confess themselves frightened at the 'alarming rapidity' with which wages are rising in India, will be glad to learn that the poor coolies of the North-West have not yet reached the golden goal of affluence. This, although a somewhat distracting and exceedingly ridiculous mode of conveyance, is necessarily not an uncommon one. A gentleman residing in Mirzapore informed us that, in company with several members of his household, he had recently travelled in his own family carriage, drawn by a group of twenty coolies, a distance of thirty-seven miles in twelve hours. He rewarded the men for their trouble with a rupee each, which was considered rather an extravagant rate of remuneration.

It was already dark when we reached the Ganges, on the opposite bank of which (the river being about half a mile wide) we could perceive the dim lights of Mirzapore glimmering amidst a shadowy prospect of trees. We crossed, gharry and all,

in a large, lumbering boat, of which some bamboo poles laid from stem to stern constituted the deck, and two black lanky figures with paddles the locomotive power. A ripple on the water might have served to wreck this crazy craft, top-heavy with the high bulk of the gharry; and the slightest puff of wind would certainly have extinguished our only light—the stump of a tallow candle with a long black wick, of which it was only denuded at our request. The stars had not yet come out *en masse*, but the crescent moon with Venus in its wake shone forth with a rich silvery clearness, both serving usefully as lamps overhead, and ornamentally as glorious objects mirrored in the stream beneath. These, indeed, were the lights by means of which we were able to cross the river. The comparative value of the moon in this region of the earth as a ‘light to the path’ will be evident from the fact of its more certain appearance during the greater portion of the year, shining night after night throughout the recurring weeks of its reign in unclouded beauty. Thus the brilliant presence of Luna is welcomed as a source of thrift, and as such is systematically turned to account even in the regulation of public affairs. We learn for example, from an official source, that the city of Bombay is supplied with 1,888 ordinary gas lamps, of which no fewer than 1,253 are ‘not lit at moonlight.’ As, therefore, the sun sets early in the evening, we must suppose that, as a rule, the glory of the lesser orb, when above the horizon, is practically deemed sufficient to irradiate the streets of an Indian city—holes and corners excepted.

On the other side of the Ganges we arrived beneath a steep frowning bank, looming above which we could perceive in the

starlight the black tower of a Hindoo temple, whence issued the clangour of a bell tolling vigorously in the service of the Mirzapore gods. At the *ghaut*, or landing-place, lay another barge similar to our own, filled with passengers, ready to cross the stream. With its company of white-sheeted figures sitting in the dark shadow of the high embankment, every tongue being silent but that of the overpowering bell overhead, it reminded us of a picture of Charon's ferryboat about to cross the Styx.

We had arranged while in Mirzapore to enjoy the hospitality of a friend, whose carriage with a messenger now appeared to conduct us home. Seated on the box with the driver, I found myself invested with the freedom of that ancient city in a more literal sense than the expression is intended to imply. Although, as I have said, yet early in the evening, darkness enveloped the town, and through innumerable small windows, left open to admit the air, we caught, in rolling past, momentary glimpses of a continuous series of tiny chambers,—cellars, parlours, and attics, dimly lighted with oil lamps,—the illuminated cells of a crowded human hive, in which the various scenes incidental to domestic life were being enacted. There was of course little time for inspection if that had been desirable, but Asmodeus himself, who from the pinnacle of St. Salvador unroofed the houses and exposed their interiors, could scarcely have furnished a better opportunity. A few minutes, however, sufficed to traverse the shadowy thoroughfares of the city, and to usher in a more soothing prospect of fields, and trees, and stars, with the still more welcome lights that glowed for our reception visible in our friend's residence a short way ahead.

Daylight, when it came, revealed nothing to excite curiosity

or admiration about the native city, which, unlike most others of importance in India, contains no special objects of attraction. Here, interspersed with mosques and temples, appear the never-failing narrow streets, composed of low-built brick or mud houses, the best of them distinguished by balconies, and many having little shops on the ground-floor, with the proprietors at work within. As the population is considered below 80,000, the public ways are not so crowded as those of Delhi and Benares. Every morning about six, however, a lively scene may be witnessed at the *ghauts*, whither, as in the case of Benares, the people—clad in loose, bright-coloured garments, red, yellow, and blue—repair to bathe in the sacred river, drinking a portion of the fluid out of their joined hands while they repeat their devotions.

The neighbourhood of Mirzapore is peculiarly rich in trees and shrubbery. On the high ground over the windings of the Ganges, and, in some instances, far too near the crumbling bank to consort with the prospect of safety, stand the pretty, many-windowed villas of the English residents, each with its vegetable and flower-gardens maintained by artificial channels in which water is frequently made to flow. This position, besides being an airy one, affords an admirable view of the river and the country around—the scene at sunset being rendered especially picturesque by the beautiful ruby and amber tints which then emblazon the western sky. In the public garden, which is here the afternoon rendezvous of European families, a few gentlemen had erected a hall containing a large swimming-bath, the luxury of which after morning exercise is a thing to be remembered.

Mirzapore still retains a reputation for its manufactures of carpets, shawls, shellac, lac-dye, and brazen utensils, as also for the quality of its indigo produced at several factories in the vicinity.

It was, not long ago, the central depôt of merchandise in the North-West, both for piece goods and cotton, and has hitherto been known as the residence of rich native brokers and bankers, who received and paid for supplies of imports ordered from Calcutta to meet the wants of the surrounding district. The fluctuating commercial accounts of business received from Mirzapore were wont to affect the goods market in Calcutta to a corresponding extent. Situated on the Ganges, in convenient proximity to the western cotton-fields, Mirzapore prosecuted a large trade in the export of that important staple throughout the whole period of dearth occasioned by the American war. On the strength of this fresh acquisition of business, cotton-presses were erected and other arrangements made to meet the happy emergency. But the motive cause being withdrawn, this trading impetus naturally collapsed almost as suddenly as it had arisen. The produce of the Berar fields besides was soon after, in the re-arrangements of highways, chiefly directed to Bombay, and, to make matters worse, the extension of the railway to Cawnpore and other places more convenient for the consuming districts diverted a large portion of the goods traffic. Thus the recent course of enterprise has been disastrous to Mirzapore, which, although it still retains the indigenous industries I have named, and to which more detailed allusion is made in the next chapter, has been gradually diminishing, and is now seriously impaired, as a mart for the general purposes of commerce. Some

idea of the revolution which the spread of railway communication has naturally effected in the trade of which Mirzapore was long the centre, is afforded by the fact that, except during the period of the rains—say from June till October, when the passage is considerably shortened,—even the steamers plying on the Ganges thence to Calcutta take from two to three weeks to go down with the stream, a much longer period of course being required for the upward journey, while the down trip of the native sailing craft, or ‘country boats,’ occupies from a month to six weeks, and their upward passage from two to three months, according to circumstances. The boat’s track indeed is long and winding compared with that of the locomotive, and the wonder is that even the dreary traffic of the sailing craft should not be yet extinct. It appears, however, that the dilatory voyages made by these vessels are due scarcely so much to the influence of wind and weather, as to the shallow and variable character of the stream, together with the frequency and duration of the crew’s carousals with friends in the various villages by the way. They are wont to struggle through the upward voyage against the rapid current by the combined aid of a square sail, spread to the westerly wind, and perhaps eight large oars, each plied by a couple of rowers. Looking at them from the banks thus toiling on, the spectator would find it difficult to imagine anything more slow and weary in this world of progress.

Now, in ante-railway days, there was only one way of escape from this method of conveyance. An alternative choice was afforded by the equally lively and progressive bullock *hackrie*, which crawled all day long on the Grand Trunk Road, and

in spite of the owner's profession of accomplishing twenty miles a day, was wont to traverse the distance between Mirzapore and Calcutta (448 miles) in little less than a couple of months, moving at the rate of about ten miles a day. Neither was there any refuge here from such social proclivities as those of the bargemen. The carriers were equally ready to luxuriate for indefinite periods upon the hospitality of friends along the route. Among dealers in cotton, indeed, this plan of forwarding became latterly very unpopular, through the growth of a much more intolérable evil than lazy carriers—every load being more or less diminished in its passage through the villages by the exactions of certain Brahminical depredators, each of whom appropriated a handful by way of '*distooree*,' or 'custom.' Such a *custom* we find recorded in British history under the more descriptive title of 'black mail,' and in circumstances scarcely more discreditable than the kindred practice of these holy men.

Mirzapore has long been celebrated for its schools and charities. That the former enjoyed a vigorous existence I had myself good reason to know, having frequently occasion to pass the door of one of these seminaries, whence at all times issued a loud clamour of youthful voices. Concerning the charities of the city no demonstration came in our way, except one signifying that mercy had not gone too far in pampering the criminal population—a gang of about twenty prisoners having passed us one day on their way from the jail to the *kutcherrie*, or court-house, all tied together with ropes circling their naked limbs.

Tokens, however, were not wanting, that the native youth of Mirzapore had made some progress in English education. A

well-known Calcutta bank was then in the act of opening a branch establishment here, and the manager was in daily receipt of letters from young baboos desirous of being engaged as clerks. No one acquainted with the Indian mind will be surprised to learn that these productions were generally of the inflated or grandiloquent order. One applicant, as the recipient of his letter informed me, out-heroded Herod by framing his communication (a ludicrous jumble of humility and assumption) in the regular petition form. It was 'The Petition of A. B. unto the Most Honourable Banking Company;' and the document, after recounting a long series of high qualifications and noble resolutions on the part of the writer, ended with the words 'and your petitioner will ever pray, *in this vital air!*'

About the same time the engineer of the railway works then in progress received a letter from one of the native clerks under his charge, intimating the writer's inability to attend in the office on account of a swelling in the arm. This epistle, however, was not confined to a simple intimation of the fact; such a course would scarcely have been creditable to one who plumed himself on having received a thorough English education. The apologist accordingly drew up his excuse in the style of a medical report, wherein he afforded his employer a detailed account of the rise and progress of the tumour, exhibiting, as a final stroke of precision, the condition at which it had arrived by a pen and ink sketch of a huge conical excrescence!

The following lucubration (copied from the 'Sindian'), which I obtained at the same time in Mirzapore, will serve as a final illustration of this subject. I am not aware whether the article has appeared before in an English publication, but the occasion

that called it forth and the spirit which it displays invest it with sufficient interest now. In any case this production may be accepted as an example, not certainly of the best kind, but of the popular style of 'native English writing.'

"Prince Albert died of fever on Saturday (14th)," so announced the ill-fated telegram of the "Times" of Tuesday last. After many efforts of earnestness and assiduity, suggested by a philosophic taste rarely combined with royal dignity, and a strength of mind worthy of the sternest scholastic cynic, he was meditating the magnificent prospect he was to lay open in this month to the curious gaze of the world, and anticipating the grateful feelings with which adventurers from remotest distances left his country, when death stretches forth his rough hand and snatches him away from all his hopes and anticipations, his mistress and children, and scenes of active exertions. Providence has so willed it, and his ways, howsoever the frailty of human affections may refuse to acquiesce in them, are past finding out. Mortal plummet cannot fathom them, and all we can now do is to mourn and deplore over the melancholy occurrence. However man may value and justly value the proper enjoyments of this world, the fact is ever apparent to him, that the pleasures, whether rational or not of his existence and his existence itself in this world must pass away. We have seen Prince Albert the husband, and in other words, to our notion, the lord of the most potent sovereign the world has ever beheld. We have seen him enjoy the most august majesty on earth, homaged by his mistress, his ministers, and courtiers, full in trappings of power and dignity, but we now see of all these things the awful question, "to what complexion they must come at last." He has undergone the same change which is the law of everything mundane—he has been dead.

'The sun of Prince Albert has gone down while it was yet day. He was born on the 26th day of August 1819, and married to our gracious Queen (only three months and two days younger than her) on the 10th day of February, 1840; and, nine months and eleven days after his union, gave birth to our Princess Royal, married, in January 1857, to Prince Frederick William of Prussia.'

In a community like that of Mirzapore, where business affairs brought home and foreign residents daily together, there was naturally some knowledge to be acquired of its inner life. The great event of the hour was the serious indisposition of one of the principal *shroffs* (bankers) in the place—an old gentleman much honoured for his wealth (which was said to exceed eight lacs of rupees, or 80,000*l.*), and highly esteemed for his generosity. The venerable *shroff* was suffering from the effects of his well-known orthodox piety. He had been to Allahabad joining in the great *Mag Mela*, and being now rather weak of body for the refreshing stimulus of a cold bath, had suffered severely from his immersion, and at that moment lay in a dangerous state under the care of the doctors.

Another well-known but less estimable citizen of Mirzapore was also reported at the point of death, having, by way of a substitute for his favourite brandy, which had been forcibly withheld, solaced himself with ‘a mixture of *spirits of turpentine and cayenne pepper*.’

It is interesting to notice that the modern conveniences of travelling have given a great impetus to such excursions as that which resulted so unfavourably for the old Mirzapore *shroff*. To render each hallowed place of popular rendezvous more accessible without diminishing its attractiveness, has been, naturally enough, the first effect of the railway system. Business in Calcutta, for example, has been more seriously affected of late years than formerly, by the annual recurrence of the very festival alluded to, and the following extract from a letter written by an extensive firm there to correspondents in Glasgow may be accepted as the latest intelligence on the subject :—

‘All goods suitable for the up-country markets have been little dealt in, in consequence of great numbers of Marwarries having gone to Allahabad to join in the religious festival now going on in that place; and, at all the principal marts throughout the North-West Provinces, business is at a standstill from the same cause.’



CHAPTER XLIII.

INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY.

Without Industry and Frugality nothing will do, and with them everything.

FRANKLIN.



T NEED scarcely be told that the tradespeople of India, however small the wages they earn, are clever craftsmen. Many splendid works bear testimony to their skill as artists, architects, masons, wrights, builders, and decorators. The elaborate black-wood furniture of Madras and Bombay, the gold and silver ornaments of Delhi, and the richly carved objects in ebony, ivory, and other materials produced throughout the country, are each and all held in appreciative demand by Anglo-Indian families, and may even be purchased from stock in the European capitals.

In the multiform aspect of Indian productive labour there are few great objects to attract the eye. Among these, in addition to the more popular industrial features to which I have already had occasion to advert, we hear of a paper-work at Bally and a sugar-work at Cossipore, both within a few miles of Calcutta; as also of a sawmill and two foundries at Bombay, each furnished with steam power and more or less extensive in its line. There are also in Madras, owned by two firms there, coffee-cleaning and sugar-refining works, likewise driven by machinery. Although,

however, such establishments as rum distilleries, biscuit manufactories, engineering, tanning, rope-spinning, shawl and carpet weaving, calico printing and dyeing works, exist to some extent in the great communities, or scattered at intervals throughout the rural districts, they are, with scarcely an exception, conducted in a rough fashion and on a small scale. When, indeed, we speak of the cotton mills of Bombay, and the jute and cotton mills of Calcutta (not many in all), we have well-nigh exhausted the catalogue of extensive manufacturing movements in India regulated by machinery. Capital and enterprise there have not taken the direction of creating a Manchester or a Glasgow. With the rude implements of former days, and by an infinite number of minute operations going on in every portion of the land, these native articles are fabricated, which still supply a considerable, if not the greater, portion of the consumption. The increasing quantity of yarns, plain and coloured, imported into India, especially at the western ports, proves the existence of an extensive manufacturing industry in foreign yarns, besides that represented by the unknown quantity of the home-spun article. I have endeavoured, in passing along, to notice the simple process of weaving as practised by the natives, in their own humble homes, or in some shady bower of nature, as well as the methods of dyeing, printing, carving, or embellishing, as conducted to a large extent within the narrow precincts of the shops in which the articles resulting from such processes are sold. And now as regards an Indian manufactory, properly so called, I may recall, as a fair specimen of the bulk of such establishments, the appearance of a celebrated native carpet-work in the city of Mirzapore. It was situated in a small courtyard, entered by a narrow passage leading from the street. On

one side extended a long narrow shed, from the roof of which depended the frames, on which rugs or carpets were wrought. The filling in of the design with wool of different colours is a well-known process, and was here going on in slow, primitive fashion, under the manipulation of several skilled but scarcely presentable operatives, every morsel of the material thus applied being secured with a knot, and the confused mass cut level as the work proceeded. This rude workshop was entirely open in front, so that it might receive from the court some supply, however inadequate, of fresher air. The whole place was thickly covered with dust and dirt, and looked indeed more like some back slum congenial to vagrancy, than a sphere of productive labour and skill. The dyework of the establishment, where, in small enclosures among heaps of rubbish and broken colour-pots, the wool received its various brilliant hues, lay round about the little yard, which, insufficient as it appeared to be for its proper purpose, likewise afforded accommodation to several goats, and a flock of starving fowls. Such were the main features of an Indian manufactory renowned for the excellence of its wares. The wages of the craftsmen employed in such concerns usually range from five to six rupees (ten to twelve shillings) per month.

There are of course many establishments in India connected with the preparation of agricultural products, which are both extensive in themselves, and furnished with the appliances of modern mechanical art. Such are the Government opium 'factories,' as well as some of the indigo 'factories,' tea 'plantations,' and cotton 'screwing' works of private enterprise, to all of which I have already alluded, and the several processes of which are familiarly known.

The cotton industry now attracting the attention of Europe is necessarily full of complications. When, for example, an order, within practicable limits, is received by a house at Mirzapore from constituents in Calcutta, it is either executed from supplies on the spot, or, these failing, transmitted to agents in outlying districts convenient to the cotton fields, by whom it is collected in small quantities from a number of petty dealers, and forwarded in native carts or boats according to circumstances. Now, cash on delivery being very properly the terms of such business, the district agents, or *gomastahs*, must be supplied with money for their purchases, and that, too, in the form of rupees, as neither has India yet acquired a gold currency, nor are bank notes in sufficient favour with the natives for the purposes of trade. The *shroffs* of the district town (in localities where such a community exists), discounting bills drawn by the *gomastahs* on their constituents, supply the funds; otherwise, however, the money must be sent in each instance direct from Mirzapore. In any case the whole of the necessary amount must needs be transmitted, sometime and somehow, in heavy bags of rupees to distances of from thirty to sixty miles. The conveyance of these loads of treasure through wild and isolated districts is naturally attended with many casualties; and it seems safe to conclude, that while such temptations to robbery exist, there will be *dacoits* in India. The *gomastahs* themselves, according to my information, have earned the respect of the European community by their honest mode of dealing with the wealth thus committed to their charge. Meanwhile, there is really no remedy for the evil, as the cotton-dealers must and will have their rupees. The cotton, however, being thus procured, each bale, prior to

being passed as in proper condition, is understood to be carefully examined by a competent judge, either European or native; though, in the case of the latter, to find honesty combined with skill, is said to be not always an easy matter. Then follows the cleaning process, the wool being laid on 'charpoys' (wooden frames covered with a network of twine), and there tossed about by women and girls, so as to be relieved of all dust and refuse, which fall through the netting to the ground. Such female employées are paid at the rate of from 2*d.* to 3*d.* a day. This operation, as well as the final one of screwing in the press, is usually superintended by native *chuprassees* in the interest of the owners, European attendance being often too scarce, if not too expensive, for such purposes; so that the safe passage of the cotton through these several stages without being tampered with, depends on the somewhat fickle course of native good faith in the persons of *chuprassee* and screw-owner—either or both.

The work thus completed in the screw-house may be either *pucka* or *kutchā* (literally first or second rate), the bales being either full-pressed and fastened with iron hoops ready for shipment across the sea, or only half-screwed and bound by jute lashings, with the view of being made perfect in Calcutta before their final despatch.

Among the few more notable manufactories of India appear the shellac and lac-dye works of Mirzapore, five or six in number, and conducted either by European or native owners. As I believe the details of this interesting item of indigenous industry are not familiarly known, I shall endeavour merely to indicate the process as pursued in the principal establishment of the place of which our friend and host was proprietor.

The raw material, called 'stick lac,' is procured from the jungles of the Central or Western districts (situated in some cases hundreds of miles distant), whence it is borne in bags slung on either side of a bullock to the nearest railway station for transmission to the seat of manufacture. It consists of the resinous deposit of a small insect, and is formed on the branches of a particular species of tree, the creatures themselves being visible like minute black specks within the excretion. Such 'lac sticks,' we learn, are also to be found in Siam and Cochin China, although I am not aware of their being turned to the like useful account. The first process they undergo in the production of lac-dye is that of clearing away the foreign matter; in the course of which they are passed through a small machine with grooved rollers, being thereby converted into the form of fine gravel. This product, in order to be freed from all wood and dust, is sifted in baskets by a staff of women and children, who shake and toss it until only the pure article remains. The lac is now ready for the *nawns*, or large stone jars, wherein, after a certain proportion of water has been added, it is beaten and stirred thoroughly by men and boys standing with bare limbs in the fluid. When the colouring matter has been thus extracted by a course of several washings, the liquid is run off into a large vat, whence, after the lapse of a day or two, it is strained through cloth covering a shallow receptacle, where it presently assumes the consistency of paste. This substance is transferred to a large screw press, in which what remains of liquid is squeezed out, and the solid residuum is removed, cut into square pieces, and stamped with the manufacturer's trade-mark. Being finally dried in a stove, it is packed in boxes and forwarded for sale to Calcutta, if not directly addressed to London.

So much for the article called lac-dye, extracted from material bequeathed to the world by a self-immolating insect, whose posthumous story is blazoned in the scarlet of opera cloaks and military uniforms, the production of that flaring tint being one of the chief ends of the manufacture.

Shellac is formed from the solid substance remaining in the *nawns* after the process just named. This after being well dried, sewn up in long bags, and subjected to the heat of a charcoal fire, gives forth a glutinous substance, which is caught as it oozes out, and kneaded with the hand (on an inclined iron cylinder filled with hot water) into thin cakes about eighteen inches square. When cool, the shellac is ready for packing—a process, however, necessitating great care in consequence of its brittle nature. As freight, also, this article requires to be cautiously stowed, from its tendency to ‘block,’ or run together. We have here the material of sealing-wax and fine transparent varnishes, while the refuse of what the bags contained serves to make ornaments for native use.

In the works where we witnessed these operations, about 500 persons—men, women, and children—were employed. The cheerful appearance of the place, and the contented expression of the operatives, illustrated the great advantage to India of such fields of labour. Even the idly disposed would scarcely desire to shirk occupations like these—healthful, sociable, comparatively remunerative, and under considerate supervision. It is indeed a pity their number should be so few. Such manufactures, however, belong to the order of things that arise by degrees in the steps of material progress and civilization.

The Bombay Municipality's Report for 1866 (with a copy of

which I have been favoured by a friend) comprises the novel and interesting feature of some detailed information on the subject of Indian trades taken from the statements of the operatives themselves, illustrated by a series of clever woodcuts from which the following examples are copied. Such details, I imagine, are not likely to have become familiar among English readers. Although explanatory of the various occupations as practised in the Bombay Presidency, they may be regarded in



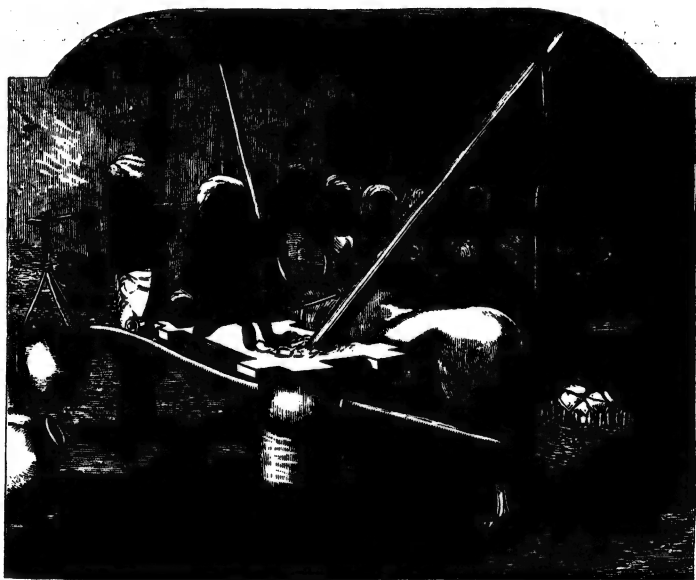
THE TANNER'S YARD.

a wider sense as illustrating the simple *modus operandi* peculiar to the industrial system of the country.

The several statements of the native tradesmen seem only to require the prefatory explanation that *chunam* signifies a fine lime; *dungaree*, a coarse description of calico; *seer*, a weight equivalent to about two pounds; *pailee*, a measure of two quarts; *mutka*, an earthen jar; *tola*, a rupee's weight; *chatty*, a common earthenware pot; *maund*, a weight of variable amount; *chula*, a fire-place; *huldee*, turmeric; and *papur khar*,

some kind of soda. With reference to the money figures, it must be borne in mind that a rupee represents the value of about two shillings, and comprises sixteen annas, each consisting of twelve pies.

Dewa Luximon Kurruck announces himself as a Tanner, in

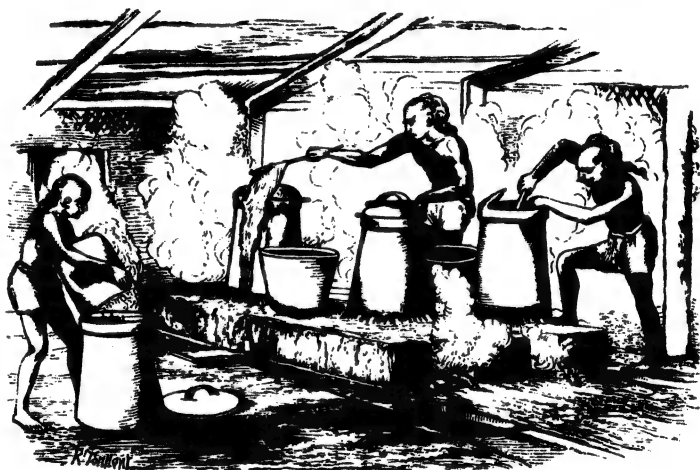


OKOO WORKING HIS OIL-MILL.

partnership with his brother Dewa Goonaje Kurruck, their ancestors having 'followed this trade in Bombay for the last 150 years.' Dewa describes the operation of tanning as practised by him, stating in effect that the hides, being brought to the tannery with the hair on, are first rubbed over with *chunam*, and then steeped in the *chunam* vat for ten or fifteen days,

after which the hair is scraped off with a chisel. He then explains the expedients necessary to give the leather a red colour when that is required. Dewa has 'six tan pits and employs two men, whom he feeds, clothes, and lodges, paying them besides twenty-five rupees annually.'

Okoo Dewa keeps an Oil-pressing shop near the Null Bazaar, and has one mill. He mixes 'about one and a half *seers* of



CAMPHOR REFINING.

water' in the press with about five *pailees* of teel seed. Then yoking the bullocks which drive round the mill he presses the seed for about an hour and a half, when the oil begins to come, running into an iron vessel which is left standing one night, so that the contents may settle and allow the pure oil to be removed on the following day.

Iadooje Nanji, a Camphor Refiner, gives the following account of his business :—

'I am a native of Kotyana, in Joonaghur Zillah, in Kattiawar. I came down to Bombay thirty-seven years ago. I am a Khutree by caste, and by trade a refiner of camphor, and a maker of goolal. I buy camphor in the boxes in which it comes from China. I pay rupees 34 for the Surat maund of 42 lbs. The Bombay maund weighs only 28 lbs. I refine camphor in the following manner:— $1\frac{1}{2}$ maund of the China camphor is mixed with $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of water, and is put into a copper vessel which is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. This quantity of camphor is made into a pyramid, and after it is put into the vessel an additional $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of camphor are thrown into the sides of the copper vessel. A copper lid is then put on, and to make it perfectly air-tight an iron bar is passed through the lid and the vessel by holes made for the purpose. The vessel is then lifted by handles and put on to an earthen chula, below which there is a fire; the lid and the edges of the vessel are smeared with wet clay, and the clay is formed into a pyramidal shape. In about fifteen minutes steam comes through the holes where the iron bar goes, and when this happens a cloth attached to a bamboo is dipped into a receptacle filled with water, and put over the clay at the top, so that the water runs down on all sides. This is kept up for three hours, when the copper vessel is removed from the chula, and the lid taken off. The camphor is found in a thick crust, lining the sides of the vessel. Before removing the vessel from the chula its sides are beaten by a stick. If this gives the sound of an empty vessel I know that the camphor is properly done. As soon as the lid is taken off, the camphor is divided into four pieces by a flat iron knife and removed. The pieces are put into boxes and sold to the dealers. When there is plenty of camphor in the market it is sold for about rupees 24 or 25 per 40 lbs.: if it is scarce, for about rupees 30 to 40 per 40 lbs. These camphor cakes contain at least three or four seers of water in the Surat maund.'

Noor Mahomed has been an Indigo Dyer (Neel Ke Run-garee) in Bombay for the last thirty years. He prefers the Bengal indigo to that which comes from Scinde. One *maund* of indigo is sufficient to dye fifty pieces of cloth each measuring forty yards long. He conducts his process thus:—

Five seers of indigo are placed in a stone basin containing water, and kneaded by the hand until the indigo is dissolved. Two seers of chunam (burnt lime) are then mixed with two seers of sajee kakhar (impure carbonate of soda), and thrown into a wooden vat containing about five maunds of water. The indigo water is then added, and a little jagree (coarse sugar), or dry dates (Kujoor), are thrown in to prevent the lime making our hands sore. This mixture is stirred at intervals and allowed to stand for two days. The cloth to be dyed is put into a vessel con-



SHEIK CASSIM DYEING CLOTH.

taining fresh water, and after being thoroughly wrung out is dipped into the indigo vat, where it is allowed to remain about five minutes. After being taken out it is wrung dry, opened, and stretched in the open air on the ground. After it is dried it is again dipped in the indigo, and this process is repeated altogether four times. The colour is then fast. The cloth is washed in fresh water, and placed on a plank, where it is beaten with a wooden hammer. I charge rupees 3 for dyeing a bundle weighing 10 lbs. and 4 annas for a seer. I employ five or six men, whose

wages vary from rupees 6 to 10 per month. They live in my house, and I supply them with food. I calculate that each man's food costs me rupees 5 per mensem. I give them bread and kichlee (cooked rice and dhall). Once during the week I eat meat, and then they have it also.'

Sheik Cassim is a Rungaree (Dyer) in various colours.

For yellow dyeing the cloth is steeped during two hours in a vessel containing half a *seer* of *huldee* and a tola of papur khar ground together, and mixed in a sufficient quantity of water. This operation being repeated four times (the cloth having been previously wrung dry on each occasion) a red colour is the result, which, however, is converted into yellow by immersion for about an hour in a certain quantity of water containing the juice of about twelve limes.

For green dyeing the cloth is dipped into a strong solution of indigo, and then treated as in *huldee* dyeing.

To produce a black colour, the cloth is immersed for four hours in a vessel containing half a *seer* of *hurda* (gall nuts) and one *tola* of *heera kussie* (sulphate of zinc), mixed in two *maunds* of water, then taken out, washed in clean water and wrung dry.

The details given of dyeing in red and purple are too lengthy for transcription, and I will only add that the trade of the Rungaree is necessarily one of great extent and importance in a country where gay habiliments are so popular, and that he can claim the merit of producing hues of extraordinary brilliancy by the simple means at his command.

I will give in full, however, the evidence of Gopal Babajee, a Bhundaree, or toddy distiller, seeing that the routine of his labour unfolds an interesting page in natural history, and that its product is a celebrated Indian intoxicant :—

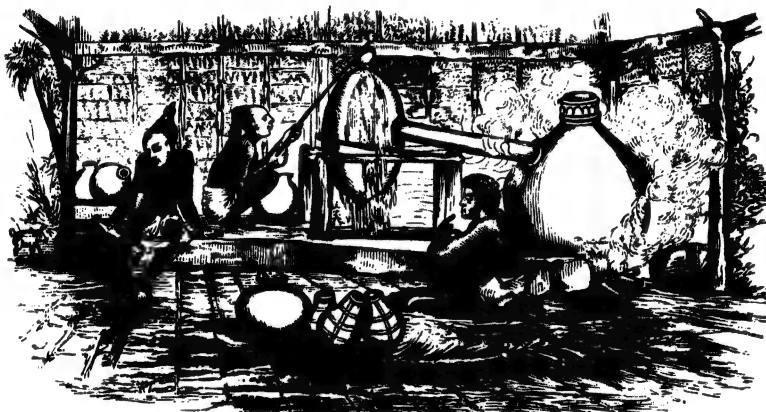
'I have carried on my trade as a Bhundaree for the last twenty years in Bombay. I have 110 cocoanut trees, for the use of which I pay the owner a monthly sum of rupees 60. I also pay the collector of Bombay 8 annas per tree per month. I employ seven men as toddy drawers, and pay them rupees 10 and annas 5 each. I provide them with tools, which cost rupees 14. These tools consist of a curved knife (broad-bladed) called aood; a waist-rope, to which, by means of a hook, they attach the toomra (fruit of the pumpkin), and a cord to assist them in ascending the trees. I pay about rupees 30 annually for tar, which is smeared round the bottom of each tree to prevent the white ants going up and eating the fruit. My annual expenses amount to

				Yearly.
110 Trees.—To owner, monthly, Rs. 60			$\times 12 =$	720
To collector	"	55	$\times 12 =$	660
Wages.—Rs. 10.5 $\times 7$	"	72.3	$\times 12 =$	866.4
Tools	.	.	.	14
Tar	.	.	.	30
				<hr/>
Rupees				2,290.4

'Cocoanut trees should not be cut before they are ten years old. They would then be about 15 feet high. From this time a healthy tree would give a daily supply of toddy for about forty years. When a new tree is to be tapped the bhundaree cuts notches in the stem about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet distant from each other. On reaching the top, the flower sheath (spathe) is tied up in several places with the fibres of a cocoanut leaf. It is then left for three days, when the end of it is cut off and a cocoanut leaf tied over the cut end. On the next day and for the three succeeding days the flower sheath is beaten all round with the handle of the knife. On the fourth day a slice is taken off and it is left exposed for one day, when a chatty pot is put on it to receive the toddy, which at first exudes very slowly, but which after a few days will fill a quart bottle. The flower sheath continues to yield toddy for about five weeks, when a new flower sheath must be treated in a similar manner.

'The toddy drawers visit their trees three times during the day. They ascend the tree early in the morning, and take the toddy which has collected during the night. After emptying the contents of the chatty pot into the toomra, they cut a slice off the end of the flower stalk be-

fore putting it on again. They again ascend at 2 P.M., and after cutting a slice off, they rub the cut end with a kind of brush made from the leaves of the iasoond (shoe-flower), which are rolled tightly together. This operation is said to clean the pores, and to allow the toddy to exude more freely. They again go up at 6 P.M. and collect the toddy. Each man has about fifteen trees to attend to. They bring the toddy to me at 8 o'clock. I dispose of a large quantity to the bakers, and some is sold to the dealers. A quart bottle full of toddy is sold for nine pies. I distil dharoo (spirit) from the toddy in the following manner. About



GOPAL DISTILLING TODDY.

five maunds of toddy are put into a large copper vat, which stands over a chula made of burnt earth. This copper vat communicates by a wooden pipe with a large earthen mutka, called ghagur. The copper vat has a tightly fitting copper lid, on which a large stone is put to make it as air-tight as possible. A fire is lighted below, and the spirit distils over into the ghagur, over which water is constantly poured. This operation takes about nine hours. The spirit that distils into the ghagur is called rhasee. It is sold for three annas a bottle. What remains in the copper vat is given to bullocks and pigs, who eat it with avidity. One and a half maund of toddy are mixed with one maund

of rhasee, and put into the copper vat. The spirit which distils over is called phenece. One bottle of rhasee will make a man intoxicated, but a quarter of a bottle of phenece will have the same effect. I sell these spirits to the spirit dealers, tavern keepers, &c. They give me rupees 10 for half a maund of phenece. I am not allowed to retail spirits. I have a police licence as a distiller, for which I pay rupees 50 for the year. I sell toddy at rupees 5 per 100 bottles to itinerant vendors, on the condition that whatever is not sold by evening may be returned.



ACHIN ADMINISTERS OPIUM.

This is made into phenece. My annual profits vary from rupees 200 to 300. There are several castes of bhundarees. All the Hindoo bhundarees are allowed to drink rhasee or phenece, but are bound by an oath not to drink toddy. They consider it a sin equal to drinking the blood of a cow. The bhundarees eat fish and mutton.'

But the catalogue does not close with the bhundaree; nor, alas! is his toddy the most injurious stimulant that muddles

the senses of his countrymen. Achin Ahoon is a Chandool (Opium) shopkeeper, who occasionally administers the drug to as many as fifty customers in one day. The *habitués* of his shop comprise Mussulmans, Hindoos, Purvoes, Banians, Mah-rattas, with sometimes a few Manilla men, but never include a single European or Parsee. The testimony of Achin is to the following effect :—

‘I buy raw opium at the custom-house, and pay rupees twenty-four for a Calcutta seer. I take a seer of raw opium and cut it up into small pieces,



CATGUT MAKERS.

which I put into a saucepan, and pour on them about seven pints of water. I put the saucepan on the chula and boil the water, stirring it up with a wooden spoon, and continue the stirring for one hour. The saucepan is then taken off the chula, and the mixture is strained through a dungaree cloth into another saucepan. The residue, which will not pass through the cloth, is thrown away, but the fluid which has passed through the cloth is then boiled a second time and left to boil down until only four pints remain. It is then thick, and is put into a jar, being ready for use. When a customer comes he asks for the quantity he requires, varying from nine pies to one rupee, eight annas worth. I always make the

customers pay first before giving them any opium. A person who can smoke one rupee, eight annas worth, would take all day doing so. I supply the opium in a little china cup, and give the smoker a pipe, which is composed of a china bottle with a piece of bamboo thrust into the mouth of it. The bottle has a small hole bored on one side. I also



THE HALALCORE.

give him an iron pin, pointed at one end, and called in Hindustan siek, and an oil lamp defended from the air by the bottom of a bottle (generally half a soda water bottle) with the end broken off. The smoker lies on a raised wooden platform matted over, which I have fitted in the centre of my shop. These articles are placed by his side. He dips

the point of the pin into the cup containing the opium, and then holds it over the flame of the lamp. The opium bubbles up and becomes inspissated. This is repeated until a small ball of porous opium is formed, which is rolled round on the pipe. This is then made red hot, and pushed into the hole on the side of the bottle. The smoke is then inhaled through the stem, and taken into the lungs, and after a short time expelled through the mouth and nose. It takes about fifteen minutes to finish a cupful, which would cost about four annas. A cupful holds about eighty minims, and will send a man to sleep. A confirmed opium smoker dare not leave off; if he does, he gets sick and dies. The greatest number of persons come to my shop at eight o'clock at night. I keep separate pipes for Mussulmans and Hindoos. I smoke very little, about one pipe every other day. My father smokes about twelve annas worth, or about forty or fifty pipes a day. If I were to drink a cupful of the opium it would kill me, but it would only make my father a little drunk. I generally buy about two seers of opium during the month, and make about twelve rupees profit on every seer; but I have to pay for the oil and the wages of one servant.'

We are further informed that the markets of Bombay are supplied by country people, many of whom come a long way with fruits, vegetables, and other commodities; that herbs are almost entirely furnished by the *Poodenawallees*, a class of women who rent small gardens, or contract with gardeners for a supply; and that the trade in flowers also is conducted by a special class of dealers on a similar plan.

It would appear that the meanest of all occupations is that of the city dustmen (in Bombay called *Halalcores*, and in Calcutta *Dhomes*), a degraded order of Hindoos, whose very shadow is shunned by the Brahminical class, and with whom all ordinary mortals in the community disdain to eat or associate. Nevertheless the Bombay Municipality papers record that these poor

outcasts were fully alive to a sense of their importance as a useful class of citizens ; and, although only 480 in number, had recently felt strong enough in their associated capacity to strike work, leaving the offal of Bombay to be dealt with by their only rivals, kites and vultures, the winged *halalcores* of the air.



CHAPTER XLIV.

THANATOPSIS.

All around us are evidences that death is living and life is dying.—*Anon.*

Large streams from little fountains flow.—DAVID EVERAT.



UNCTUALITY is a rule little honoured in the navigation of the Ganges; so little that we were considered fortunate in having only an hour or so to wait for the steamer, in which, for the sake of variety, we had elected to descend to Benares on our way back to Calcutta. This passage usually occupies the period between daylight and dusk, and happily that was nearly all before us, as it was yet early in the morning when we arrived at the place of embarkation a few miles above Mirzapore. We found it a deserted spot, where, strangely enough, nothing stirred but the low sand-bank on which we stood two or three feet above the stream. All along the water line the bank was being rent by a succession of fissures; first one fragment, and then, after a brief interval, another fell into the stream with a monotonous splash; and only the action of the voracious current, as it devoured its boundary, broke the stillness of that solitary shore.

When the steamer did appear it proved to be one of the

best of the fleet then plying on the Ganges, propelled by an engine of seventy-five horse-power, and towing a 'flat' laden with about 140 tons of produce. Like the rest of its class this was a flat bottomed boat—the better to suit the shifting shallows of the river, and the ever-recurring emergency of sticking fast by the way. Now this very common predicament of grounding is encountered by all on board with a serenity which, but for the frequency of the catastrophe, might be held as remarkable. It is invariably succeeded by the rattling of a heavy chain, with which a portion of the hands betake themselves to the bank, where they attach it to a stake first driven into the ground, and this chain being also connected with the capstan on board, a few turns are generally sufficient to haul away the ship from her superficial hold of the sand bed. Although the accommodation was ample and the living good, there were no other European passengers of the party on this occasion. The captain, strangely enough, was a Yankee who had once followed the scarcely analogous occupation of navigating the Atlantic, and whose tall lean figure, cased in a loose white suit and crowned with a straw hat of enormous brim, stood throughout the shining hours quaintly conspicuous beneath the double awning that protected the afterdeck from the sun.

Among the rural songs and poetry of England there is no subject more popular or fascinating than the 'flowing river,' its verdant banks overhung with rich foliage, the home of song birds, and bright with wild flowers, the haunt of bees and butterflies. Such, however, are not the terms in which we can describe the Ganges in these parts. With a steep mud bank on one side, and, on the other, a bare level plain receding from a

sandy margin ; alternate glimpses of jungle and partially cultivated soil formed the most constant features of the scene. The few villages we passed looked silent and unpeopled ; and the single prominent object on the route was the old garrison town of Chunar, so famous in the history of Mussulman rule, whose picturesque fort built on a rocky eminence 104 feet above the river, displayed a flag hoisted half-mast high—the usual symbol of death. Toiling along the bank under the lurid sky, an occasional band of coolies came into view, dragging, ‘with weary steps and slow,’ the cumbrous form of some country boat against the current ; but what else of active life pervaded this dreary region was due to the presence of death. ‘Wheresoever the carcass is there will the eagles be gathered together.’ But here the vulture band was swelled by a congenial brotherhood of kites and crows, lean, starving jackals, and mangy pariah dogs. As the steamer pursued her winding course we witnessed from time to time, like vivid dioramic pictures, some strange and suggestive groupings of this weird menagerie of the stream. A mere sample of these, however, will doubtless be more acceptable to the reader than many illustrations.

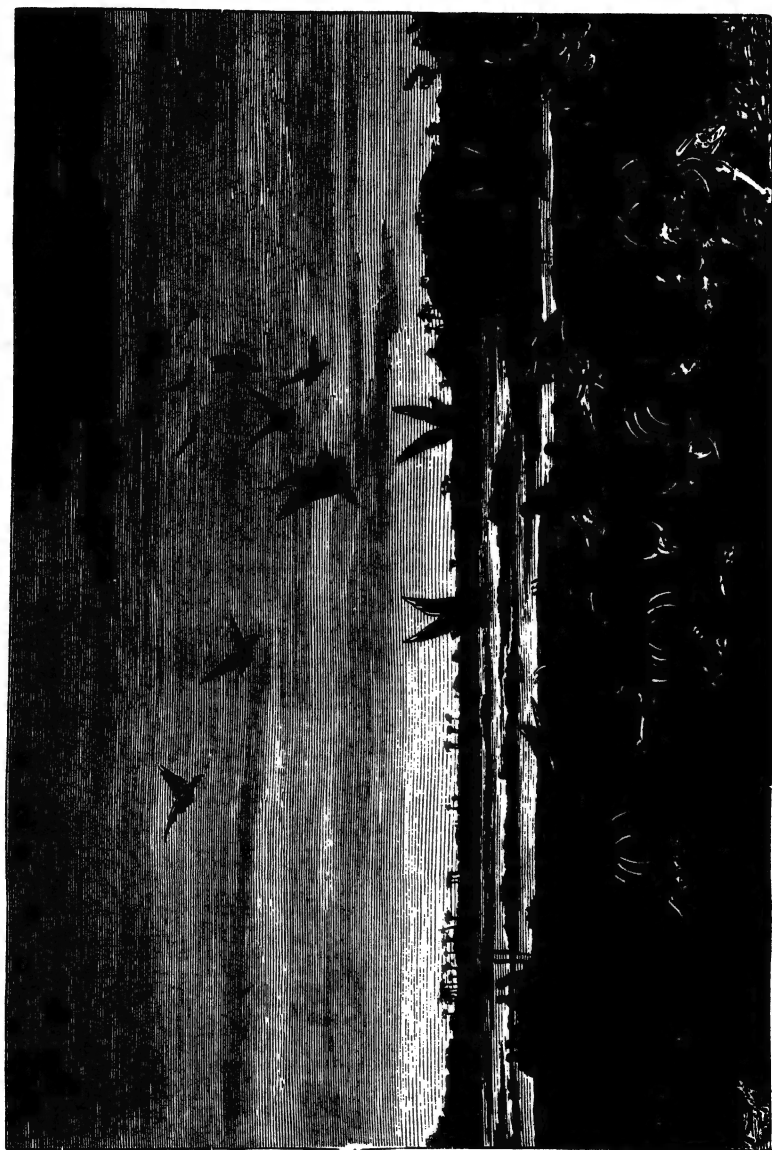
A solitary jackal, impelled no doubt by starvation, had overcome his gregarious instincts, and gone forth on his own account to the river’s brink, where he was tearing voraciously at the remains of a human body, while a couple of emaciated pariah dogs made hot haste down the steep bank to share the repast, barking wildly as they ran.

In the water, but near the brink, appeared a large white bird consuming its meal almost within reach of the protruding snout of a dog, whose wasted condition rendered him either unwilling

or unable to take the water. Thus situated the animal vented his rage and disappointment in alternate barks and howls, but, strangely enough, without in the least disturbing his winged neighbour. One short spring and the whole booty, dead and alive, would have been his own. It would appear, however, that no such contingency was apprehended by the other; nor, so far as our observation went, was that conclusion erroneous, for the unsightly pair continued in the same position till they were gradually lost to view.

Occasionally this floating banquet of kites and vultures was enlivened by a group of spectators in the form of a sable retinue of crows hopping attendance on the banks, in the expectation that, when their superiors were gorged, *their* turn might come. And, similarly, it could be observed, that when dogs held possession of the prey, the vultures were required to bide their time, which they did apparently with patience and resolution, sitting at a suitable distance for the double purpose of observation and safety, close together and motionless like dark images on the sand. Truly the philosophy of the proverb, that 'hunger sharpens a man's wits,' seems equally applicable to the lower creation.

But, *ohé! jam satis*, these certainly are not pleasant sketches. They are, however, not only true pictures of life, but striking examples of that providential dispensation which, ever guided by a wise economy, makes even the despised pariah dog, or obscene bird of the desert, perform a useful part in the great scheme of the universe. In such an ordeal, repulsive as are some of its aspects, we trace the operation of that divine law of compensation which pervades every region of the earth,



Throughout the vast plains of India, where life in myriad forms is teeming under a burning sun, the King of Terrors would rule with pestilential results but for the office fulfilled by these natural scavengers of the land and water. Thus it is that the large 'adjutants' of Calcutta are not only permitted to move among the people, but encouraged to pick up garbage under shelter of the law, which inflicts a heavy fine for the destruction of any one of their number. Elsewhere, isolated spots are set apart as charnel grounds, where winged creatures, congregating in great flocks round every carcase committed to the place, forestall the process of decay. The annexed illustration of one of these localities is taken from the Bombay official report, which I have already turned to account. It appears that the vultures and other birds of prey sit watchfully on the sides and summit of Cumballa Hill, a suitable midway station; whence, marking the footsteps of death, they can turn a sharp eye on one side to the Parsee 'Towers of Silence,' and on the other to this terrible Golgotha, whither cattle rendered useless by disease or decay are borne to be swiftly consumed.

And so the deep-rolling Ganges, with populous tracts of country on either side, and crowded communities on its shores, is in reality a long watery grave throughout its far-winding course, from the Punjab to the Bay of Bengal. A reputed river of bliss and very highway to paradise, it is naturally in great requisition with the people as a receptacle for the ashes of their dead. But, as we have already seen, wood for burning proves in many cases too expensive an acquisition, and, in these circumstances, the question naturally arises among the poor—if the calcined ashes of the departed may thus be floated

into glory, why not the entire anatomy? Hence the repulsive habit which, till lately, made ghastly even the banks of the capital, of launching human forms, generally, though not always, partly consumed by fire, promiscuously into the stream.

A friend whom we visited up country had a *dinghy wallah* (boatman) in his employment, who one morning came begging a few days' respite from work in order that he might perform the funeral rites of his mother who had just died. The request for this holiday was readily granted, it being a recognized habit among Hindoos to celebrate such mournful events by a prolonged festival *in memoriam*. On entering his establishment that same afternoon, however, the master was astonished to perceive his *dinghy wallah* quietly at work as if nothing had occurred to distract his thoughts.

'Hallo, Ramghopa! I thought you had gone to attend the funeral of your mother!' 'So I had,' was the reply; 'but when we had carried her down to the river, and were in the act of putting her in, we were astonished to perceive some signs of life; so we bore her home again on the bier, and she seems likely to recover!'

Well-appointed houses near the river possess such a servitor as the *dhome*, whose office it is to clear the premises of whatever dead bodies the current may float to the brink. In the establishment of our host at Mirzapore this situation was filled by an aged woman, whose bent and shrunken figure was visible betimes, wandering on the banks, carrying a bamboo rod wherewith to push these unsightly objects out into the stream. Her salary was one rupee per month, not high remuneration certainly for an armed retainer of the family. It sufficed, how-

ever, that this office should be assigned to a feeble guardian, seeing that no resistance could be offered by the visitors whose unconscious intrusion it was her duty to repel.

Another branch of industry practised throughout the windings of the Ganges is that of searching for any rag of clothing with which corpses may have been committed to the flood. This method of gaining a livelihood we once saw represented in the person of a wild-looking creature with long tangled hair, who haunted the river's brink provided with a far-reaching pole having a hook at the end.

It is popularly understood that the orthodox and respectable mode of sepulture is to burn the body, and to consign only the ashes to the bosom of Gunga; nor are those who bestow any thought on the subject, and can afford to exercise a choice, by any means indifferent to the nature of their own obsequies. A wealthy broker, well known to my informant, died recently in Mirzapore, leaving a sum of 1,000 rupees (about 100*l.*) appropriated with special instructions to this end in his will. He could not, of course, indulge his fancy with a gilded coffin, gorgeous mort cloths, or other trappings of the tomb, such posthumous attractions having no existence for him. But he chose to be *burnt with sandal-wood*, and it is recorded that precisely the allotted amount was spent on the aromatic conflagration which wafted the old gentleman's remains from this sublunary sphere.

Tradition and habit in our own country lead us to recoil with horror from this speedy and thorough mode of exit from the material world. Yet, strange as it may appear, such is not the universal feeling among those of our countrymen, whom long

observation has rendered familiar with that last ceremonial in the East. Recently, and in a forcible letter addressed to the Municipal Commissioner, the esteemed 'health officer' of Bombay recommended the erection of a 'cinerator' at one of the burning *ghauts*, which would speedily reduce to ashes every form of humanity exposed to its flames; this, too, on the magnanimous ground of charity towards the poor, seeing that 'the cost of fuel for cremation is exceedingly heavy,' the time required for consumption by the ordinary method being fully four hours. So far we have nothing to do with a question in which the health officer, the municipality, and the moribund citizens of Bombay are the only parties concerned; but it is otherwise when the able statist proceeds to recommend the 'cinerator' for our adoption in Europe, supporting his suggestion, moreover, with arguments which it would be impossible to parry on principles of public convenience and national economy. Nevertheless we feel instinctively as if the subject were outside the sphere of such calculations. Our religion consecrates the 'natural body,' and the poetry of human feeling is full of regard for the honoured lineaments of the dead. Where our loved ones sleep there do we hope to lie. The soul naturally yearns to merge the present world in the life to come, and to perceive in death only the fate of one

'Who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.'

It is thus a deep-rooted sentiment which makes the heart cling to the material form of the departed, and prompts the hand of affection to clothe it in suitable garments for the grave. No

doubt the earth to which we consign our dead is itself a 'cinerator' in effect—a slow but sure annihilator of corporeal humanity. Yet, at least, it takes us peacefully to its bosom, and fulfils its mission, not roughly, with swift-consuming, crackling fires, but by a silent process of absorption prolonged through revolving years.

The scenes to which I have referred naturally rendered our day's sail on the Ganges more instructive as a lesson of life than attractive as a tour of pleasure. Towards sunset we passed the palace of the Maharajah of Benares—a large plain building, situated in the immediate vicinity of the city, and chiefly distinguished by the large number of handsome state barges and gaily painted canoes moored in front. The Maharajah himself was absent, not having yet returned from Allahabad, whither he had gone for the purpose of 'doing *poojah*,' an event which had manifestly been productive of most revolutionary consequences in his household—the windows, even including those of the state rooms, being literally crowded with servants and retainers, looking forth, all evidently in a highly sociable and jocular mood, on the imposing spectacle of a large steamer navigating the waters of the Ganges.

As the vessel passed slowly in front of Benares to her moorings at the other end, the short twilight was just lapsing into darkness. We were glad of the opportunity thus afforded of witnessing once more that huge towering mass of masonry, with its distorted gables and sunken walls next the river, apparently biding the time when they should be wholly engulfed in its depths. But the picturesque population of the city had entirely forsaken their favourite morning resort. The granite cells were

there, but no priestly occupants ; not a solitary figure appeared in the blank row of rafts. The bright vision of life was gone. The worshipping crowd on the banks or in the water, the bright-robed throng of citizens streaming up and down the steps of the great *ghaut*, the hum of multitudinous voices, and the sounds of productive industry, might all have been born of the sunshine in which they were first revealed to us, so completely had every trace of them departed. The people of India are children of the sun by habit as well as by birth. And so, although the theatre of action lay before us, unchanged but for the falling shadows of night, nothing else remained to recall the strange vivid life-drama we had recently seen enacted here under the presidency of the metropolitan gods of Hindostan.

Here the odious *dák* gharry again awaited us, but we went on our way rejoicing to think that, ere long, it would be no more than a reminiscence of trouble. Thus Calcutta was regained by the same route we had already traversed, so that any attempt to record the incidents of the way might constitute me the author of a twice-told tale.



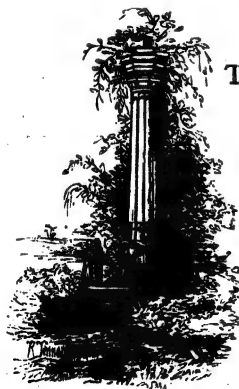
CHAPTER XLV.

CONCLUSION.

The science of governing is merely a science of combinations, of applications, and of exceptions, according to time, place, and circumstances.—ROUSSEAU.

While the rapid shuttle rattles
Through the loom with grateful sound,
Lulling all the din of battles,
Weaving peace the world around.—HEDDERWICK.

Through the shadow of the globe, we sweep into the younger day ;
Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.—*Locksley Hall*.



It is an axiom in political economy, that no country can attain to a condition of solid peace and prosperity apart from the unity of its people. The aim, therefore, of British rule in India is nothing less than the creation of a national life. For in this lies the unparalleled difficulty of the situation, that our Eastern empire more resembles a continent than a state, and that the millions now our countrymen comprise alien races, whom many generations of a common lot have failed to consolidate or reconcile.

The sources of this social disunion may be traced back to an

early period of the country's history, when the Aryans—that conquering race of Central Asian origin, known to the old world as having settled in Persia and China, as well as by the Mediterranean shores—crossed the Himalayas, and after a series of fierce struggles with the primitive population of India, became paramount in Northern Hindostan.

Then, indeed, two races could scarcely have been more dissimilar. The aboriginal Indians, or Dasyans, were black and stunted, speaking a variety of cacophonous dialects, averse to all forms of government, and possessing scarcely any notion of the future life; while the Aryans were fair and stalwart, having a noble language, an excellent code of laws, and a lively conception of the immortality of the soul. Yet, strange as it must appear, the population of India to-day includes Aryan and non-Aryan races, exhibiting distinctive features, that have not been obliterated during the many centuries which have elapsed since their progenitors fought for possession of the North-Western plains. Notwithstanding the high stimulus supplied by such advantages as theirs, the conquerors lapsed into habits of luxury; and, being enervated and demoralised through sloth, were conquered and oppressed in turn; Tartar, Afghan, and Mogul successively became masters of the land, each wave of invasion leaving its impression on the native constitution.

Although, therefore, we are accustomed in England to hear the 'people of India' spoken of as if they were a homogeneous nation, the truth is that the great peninsula is inhabited by men of various origin and widely different character. To take an extreme example, it may be held that the whole Western world does not supply an instance of typical contrast

so marked as that existing between the lean, weakly denizen of Southern Bengal and the broad robust Sikh of the Northern frontier. The ethnical distinction between these two infinitely transcends any dissimilarity in feeling, habit, or religion that exists among the nations of Europe.

With what ultimate success then is the British Government likely to pursue the Herculean task in which it is engaged, of gathering together these scattered elements of the social system, and building the compact fabric of a state ?

One thing at least is certain : it were needless to grope for a solution of the difficulty among the dry bones of the past. Those who would estimate the future of India must base their calculations on the fact that the forces, moral and political, which now guide its destiny, were evoked within the memory of men who still contemplate the country's progress. Not that Indian history is without any evidence of civilization. The reign of Akbar, for example, was a period of national glory, when even Western nations heard with wonder what rumour told of the power and grandeur of the empire. This, however, was not a robust civilization born of productive industry and the arts of peace ; it was the fleeting offspring of courts and camps fed from the spoils of war.

Although a hundred years are gone since the Mogul dynasty began to wane, scarcely half that period has elapsed since British power became paramount. The policy of 'lapse,' or gradual annexation, instituted by Lord Dalhousie, is of still more recent origin ; and coming yet nearer the present day, it may be said that the Mutiny of twelve years' ago, like the purifying thunderstorm, ushered in what must be practically regarded as

the history of British India. Only since then have those great administrative questions been matured on which the progress of the country and the fate of the people hang ; up to that hour, the records of our rule unfold little else than a long fierce struggle between the forces of European civilization and those of Asiatic barbarism.

The American war, no doubt, exercised a powerful influence on cotton cultivation in India, giving that extensive branch of industry an impetus which it could not have otherwise acquired. Nor, among the advantages externally derived, is it possible to forget the benefit conferred on the country by the transfer of the Government from the hands of the East India Company to those of the Crown. The direct responsibility and superior resources of the British nation not only served to accelerate the work of material advancement, but to diffuse an increased sense of security and confidence among the people. That grand measure introduced a wider aim and a less selfish policy than formerly prevailed, affording the native millions a stronger personal interest in the welfare of the State, and no longer subjecting their claims to the maintenance of a good dividend on East Indian stock.

Altogether, however, history does not record a kindred example of colonization, whether as regards rapidity of growth or brilliancy of result. Within the space of half a century, what between the progress of cultivation and the acquisition of territory, the Gross Revenue of British India has been more than doubled ; while thousands who have not yet become old in commercial intercourse with the country, remember the day when, instead of a weekly overland steamer carrying the post and

passengers; the only means of intercourse was a monthly mail service by the Red Sea, or a tedious route round the Cape, conveying them to their destination in a period varying from four to five months. Then the course of our Indian trade was to those engaged in it a mystery as fickle and unreliable as the direction of the wind. A shipment of British manufactures, indeed, was not only deemed but designated a 'venture,' the praiseworthy candour indicated by that term being popularly shown forth in the lithographed preamble of the invoice by which the goods were accompanied.

Yet with every desire for the world's advancement, our Indian merchants, as has been formerly stated, regard the greatly vaunted blessings of a weekly postage and daily telegraph with partial favour only. Nor is this at all surprising when we bear in mind the fact, that they are thus practically subjected to the intrusion of a succession of fleet, exacting messengers, arriving in and out of season, always most importunate in troublous times, and often peremptorily demanding an instantaneous decision on some knotty point of business. From these assailing forces of modern science the commercial man of to-day has no means of escape. But especially hard is the case of the perspiring Anglo-Indian, who, in that far land where his forefathers luxuriated without fear of interruption in the long drowsy interval of the outward and homeward mails, sits, it may be in a larger office, and surrounded by superior appliances of comfort, but with the arriving or departing post ever imminent, and uncertain of the moment when the electric flash may rouse him to the execution of yet another task. Steam and telegraphy have thus vastly augmented the work of the mercantile system, although,

at the same time, they have steadied its course and dispersed the mists of speculation.

Nor has the change, which a few years has wrought, been less wonderful in the purely Asiatic sense. It is a striking fact to begin with, that the national plan of education, so extensive and fruitful, together with the native organs of the press, so numerous and emphatic, had both their origin within the recollection of men yet taking an active part in public affairs.

On the renewal of the East India Company's charter in 1813, a grant of 10,000*l.* was voted for purposes designated as 'the revival and promotion of literature,' &c. It was only however, in the following year, that, roused apparently by Dr. Marshman's admirable pamphlet, entitled 'Hints for the Establishment of Native Schools,' the Government really began to provide instruction for the people. The Indian educational code, as now established, is nevertheless a creation of yesterday.

At the period immediately preceding the Mutiny, the system of vernacular education had scarcely taken root. Normal and female schools were unknown, and although some Government colleges existed, there were no universities. Progress has been greatest in Bombay and least in Madras; but it is authoritatively alleged that, on the average, not less than one youth out of every 400 of the population is now a pupil in one or other of the state-supported seminaries scattered throughout the three Presidencies.

It will be evident, however, from the diversified character of the people, that in prosecuting this parental duty of educating the young, Government is not ruling a happy and contented family. That ancient and bitter enmity between Hindoos and

Mahommedan, which is popularly regarded as the main source of our own security, here presents a formidable obstacle. Loud complaints are vented by the Mussulman body, regarding what they do not hesitate to stigmatize as the greater favour shown to their Hindoo fellow-subjects. One malcontent for example, writing to the 'Calcutta Englishman,' denounces the 'neglect and contempt' with which his order has been treated for 'near a quarter of a century;' and avers that the Hindoos have 'extruded the Mahommedans alike from state literature and state employ.'

The statement, indeed, is practically true; for, without doubt, the comparatively low ebb of Mussulman wealth and power in the upper strata of life is reflected in the present condition of the masses. It is to be observed, however, that this result is not due so much to the wilful neglect of Government as to the interposition by the people themselves of that old troublesome spirit of bigotry and fanaticism which thwarted all administrative efforts to deal with it, and led to the extinction of the Mahommedan dynasty.

This subject is a *questio vexata* of to-day. The so-called mal-arrangements of the two Madrissas established in Bengal for the education of Mussulman youth are now being discussed and exposed in the Calcutta press. One of these, called the Hooghly Madrissa, founded by a benevolent countryman, attracts very few students; nor can much more be said for the other—the Calcutta Madrissa, which is, however, the oldest institution of its class in India, having been established by Warren Hastings about the year 1780, chiefly for the instruction of Mahommedans in their favourite Arabic language. Since that

period a variety of changes have been made in the mode of tuition, with the object of providing for the advancing requirements of the time. That some of these, however, were of an injudicious character, may be concluded from their entire want of success, together with the fact stated, that an official 'commission' is at present making inquiry into the systems of instruction pursued in both Madrissas. The Mahommedan leaders of opinion complain that no English is taught in the Arabic department, and protest against the Government policy of prescribing English as the only medium of communication for the higher branches of knowledge. They and their followers decline to sit side by side with their Hindoo brethren in the state-aided schools, and claim to be provided with special seminaries, in which the philosophy, science, and literature of the civilized world shall be taught in their own classical and vernacular languages. *Then*, it is asserted, Mahommedan youth would have the opportunity of qualifying for that state employment from which they are presently 'extruded' by the Hindoos.

Undeniably one-sided as this argument is, the popular conviction, nevertheless, seems to be, that it will be better to concede the demand than to brave the combined consequences of prolonged ignorance and discontent among this important section of the people. Meanwhile, as regards the number who are actually taking advantage of the system of State education, we learn that, in 1865-66, out of nearly half a million children attending schools under Government inspection in Bengal, the North-West Provinces, the Punjab, Bombay, and Madras, about 86,000, or 18 per cent., were Mussulmans.

Turning next to the interesting subject of the press, we learn

that the first native newspaper appeared in Calcutta in the year 1818. It was styled the *Sumachar Durpan* (or 'Mirror of Light'), and was soon followed by the *Temirunasuk* ('Destroyer of Darkness'), and the *Sumachar Chundrika* ('Moon of Intelligence'). The high promise of these titles, however, was not in each case fulfilled. When for instance, not long afterwards, the law abolishing *suttee* was proclaimed, and Hindoo society was consequently agitated to its centre, the 'Mirror of Light' indeed reflected the humane principles of the measure, but the 'Moon of Intelligence' shone coldly on it as oppressive and unwise.

Nor has this contrariety of sentiment disappeared with the extraordinary expansion of journalism. The national mind, as portrayed in the native press, is an indescribable medley of conflicting thoughts and fancies. A few random selections may serve to illustrate the present tone of the Indian *vox populi*.

The *Koh-i-Noor* exclaims: 'Oh God! what rule is this by which no governor is allowed to remain at the head of affairs in Hindostan a longer period than five years! No doubt there is no appointment in Hindostan, or even in all the world, greater than this; but because the term of office is so limited, the poor governor does, or tries to do, his best; and even then he has not sufficient time to do anything.' The writer says, there is an impression in history which is daily gaining ground, that China will surpass Great Britain and Europe; and goes on to say, that when the term of a governor is drawing to a close, he tries to hurry on with all he has left undone; that 'Sir John Lawrence, during his latter days of service, made great haste to pass resolutions that had, from year to year, been neglected.' The writer is of opinion that it would be well to add two more years, and 'even then the term would be too short.' The dignity and honour of the governor-general are such as one sees of the kings in a puppet-show, the strings of which are held by those who make the dolls dance.'

The *Chabook* condemns the 'Times of India' for its defence of the Bombay Bank directors, in doing which it has left the usual paths of journalism.—The same sees no reason why rupees, fifteen lakhs and odd of the Indian Revenue, should be spent in support of the Christian Church. How many other useful things could be done with the same money !

A correspondent of the same paper writes upon the advisability of female incarceration as heretofore in place of allowing the females of India that liberty with their European sisters, which is sure to prove dangerous in destroying their chastity, in the present immoral and unregenerate state of the Hindu community.

The *Mufid-ul-Alam* of Futtehghurh has his doubts of the propriety of natives visiting England to be educated, in case they may be tempted to forget their wives at home and to marry again.

The *Som Prokash* says, the carelessness of the British Government with respect to the ancient temples, buildings, and burying-places of India has brought them a bad name. . . . The Christian Government of Greece has rebuilt the temples of Jupiter and Theseus of ancient times. In the same way it is the duty of the Government of this country to restore the ruined temples and mosques of India.

The Hindoo *Hitoishinee* appeals to Government to lessen the postage on native newspapers. The reasonableness of such a request will be seen if a proper investigation be made into the condition of the readers of these papers. Some can hardly afford to read them, owing to the postage being more than the value of the paper.

The *Dubdubba Secundree* : 'Articles of consumption in England are perfected by means of machinery, the perfection and economy of which all the world approves. That articles made in Hindostan bear no comparison, and even the natives themselves do not approve of them ; but still there are exceptions, as some things are so well made in India that the Chinese and English with all their skill and appliances cannot make them. Cashmere shawls, for instance, are brought to such perfection that all the kings of the world wear them. The clever English have constructed many a machine for working such things, but they could not succeed in working the Cashmere shawls or Dacca muslins. History

clearly shows that this cannot be done in England. Even now in Europe the fair and delicate ones wear dresses of Dacca muslin, which were sold in the days of Akbar for from five to fifteen gold mohurs according to quality, while even now in Cashmere shawls can be worked up to Rs. 7,000. But, independent of this, the Cashmere paper, ink-stands, gold and silver cloths, silks from Mooltan, carpets from Shajehanpore, sugar, the Chunar earthenware, Jeypore and Gya marble work, are all worthy of notice. And if Hindostan were to bring machinery into use it would soon surpass Europe.'

The Hindoo *Hitoishinee* exposes the pride and insolence of the educated natives, who assume quite a different character as soon as they are installed in some high office under Government, from what they maintained while prosecuting their studies in colleges and schools; and recommends that they should at least treat their own countrymen, and especially the poorer classes, with respect and kindness.

The Post Office officials are said by the *Akbar-i-Alum* to 'swallow down the property of the public like their mother's milk.'

The *Nujm-ool-Akbar* offers some remarks upon the evils resulting from the custom of dressing native children in costly jewellery, merely for the purpose of displaying them.

The *Zea-ool-Ukhbar*, under the heading 'False Ideas,' remarks that ignorant people generally have an idea that the object of Government in getting up schools is for the purpose of converting people to Christianity; and in consequence of this they prefer keeping their children at home and uneducated, rather than send them to school. The editor thinks that this is not the case, and advises them to believe that the only object Government have in view is the dispelling of the darkness of ignorance, and bringing people to the light of knowledge. 'Our Government has no wish to interfere in religious matters.'

The *Som Prokash*, remarking on the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland, cannot see why Indian funds should be spent in the support of chaplains and repair of churches. Hindoos hate Christianity; Mussulmans regard it as an error; Brahmists look upon it as a refined superstition; and it is easy to see how exceedingly iniquitous it is to use funds derived from a country where Hindooism and Mahommedanism

are prevalent in the support of Christian ministers. The British Government have once and again engaged not to interfere with the religion of their subjects. Yet, from the time when Sir John Lawrence became governor, in almost every week's Gazette, the appointments of Christian ministers appear like those of Civil servants. For their support, their travelling expenses, and the erection and repairs of Christian churches, thirty lakhs, or half of the amount derived from the Licence Tax, have been expended. Why should not Christians support their own ministers and defray the expenses attending their religion, as we do?

The *Soodhaburshun Gazette* is of opinion that some serious step should be taken to check the rapid increase of destitute Europeans in Calcutta. The place is completely overrun by individuals of the above class, who have apparently no legitimate means of support. The whole community are men of corrupt morals, who are a scourge to wayfarers, and are patrons of liquor-shops, brothels, and all haunts of evil notoriety.

The *Khair Khwah Punjab*, under the heading, 'The Sonthal Country,' says:—'In each and every one of the non-regulation provinces, the Government hen is hoping to hatch those non-regulated eggs similar to the regulation ones, and doing her best to bring them up in a proper manner. But the Sonthal egg, unlike those of Marwar, Khandeish, Punjab, and Arracan, has been found too difficult to hatch, and the hen has grown quite tired of sitting over it and hatching it properly.'

The *Som Prokash*, referring to the order passed by the Governor-General on the subject of native gentlemen and others keeping on their shoes, when they come into the presence of the authorities, says, that in one point His Excellency has done injustice; in another, has made a mistake. 'Why is he so bitter against native shoes? Those our Nawabs and Rajahs wear are most costly, and beautifully embroidered. Each pair is worth more than 500 pairs of English shoes. It is not reasonable they should lay these aside. The order should have allowed shoes of all kinds to be retained.' Further, Europeans take off their hats in token of respect: to preserve consistency, there ought then to be an order requiring Hindoos and Mahomedans to take off their *pugrees*. This rule ought to have been made compulsory all over India; it is a

mistake to confine it to certain portions, and render fresh difficulties in other parts probable.

The *Sholatur*, an Urdu paper, published at Cawnpore, in an article on the late famines, treats us to the following reading of an episode in the book of Genesis :—‘ During the seven years’ famine in Egypt Joseph is said to have made vast storehouses of grain, and in the first year of famine to have sold the corn for money, in the second for jewels, in the third for other kinds of property, in the fourth for land, in the fifth for slaves. In the sixth year starving persons became slaves in return for allowances of grain. In the seventh, all became slaves. In the eighth, the money and property were returned, and all persons restored to their former condition.’

The *Unjumun Hind* alludes to a meeting of Hindoos, at which the Rajah of Bulrampoor and some pundits assembled to express regret, and consider how it is, that the Hindoo creed does not make any progress, but, on the contrary, is daily getting worse ; and to prevent this they were all most anxious. ‘ But the editor of the “ Indian Mirror,” who is against Infidels and defends the true faith, says, that all this is the same that was at first created in the *Dhurm Saba* ; and with this kind of interference this creed cannot be discouraged, but will increase daily.’

The *Probhakur*, after passing certain strictures on the actual or supposed plans of Lord Mayo, proceeds to review in detail, and in the following strain, almost the entire constitution of the State :—

Firstly.—There is no need of the Finance Minister.

We have observed that nothing has been done by him during these ten years. So that it is desirable to have the post at once dispensed with, and thus save the Government a sum of one lakh and twenty thousand rupees a year.

Secondly.—The annual flights of His Excellency the Governor-General of India to the *Indian Capua* should be stopped. In that case there will be a saving of about five lakhs of rupees. If this stay in the Hills of the subordinate rulers and other authorities be discontinued, we believe a sum equal and even greater than the above may be spared.

As the article is too long for insertion here, the other points of maladministration that have provoked the *Probhakur's* censure are given, without the arguments by which they are supported.

Thirdly.—The number of judges in the courts of Bengal can be conveniently reduced.

Fourthly.—A Sessions judge need not be kept in every zillah.

Fifthly.—The services of all the judges in the Small Cause Courts located in the districts should be dispensed with.

Sixthly.—There is no necessity of retaining the services of separate assessors of Income Tax. They are only oppressing the subjects at large.

Seventhly.—The empire is uselessly encumbered with extravagant charges by the retention of the services of the director of public instruction and the inspectors of the educational department.

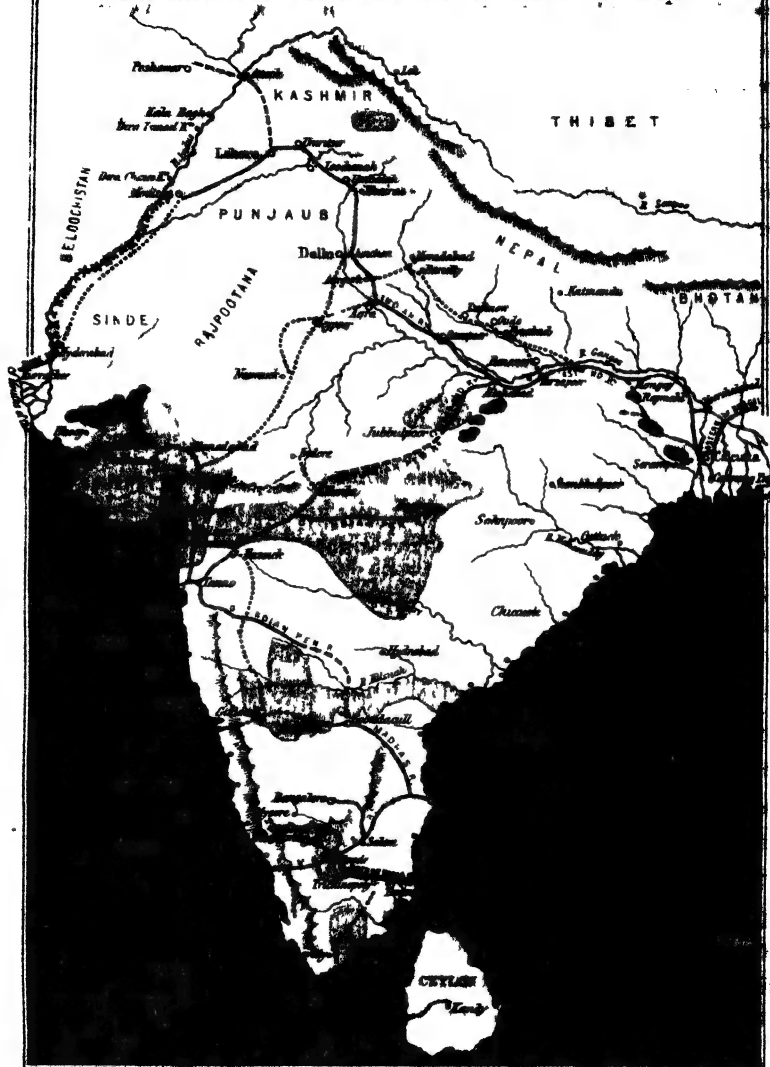
Eighthly.—We do not see any necessity of a separate Legislative Council and a separate commander-in-chief in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies.

Ninthly.—It seems to be of great importance to reduce the number of clerks in the several adawluts of the country.

Tenthly.—Along with the strenuous endeavours now directed towards destroying the power of the thieves of the Public Works and the Commissariat departments, it is advisable to do away at once with the contract system.

The language of other native writers, in upholding the peculiar institutions of their own country, and commenting on British life and manners, forms a curious and not uninteresting study. As I write, we learn from English journals that Prince Alfred's arrival in India was furnishing the native press with a new and lively theme of comment, embracing not only the official arrangements in connection with the event, but the real or presumed conduct and proclivities of His Royal Highness himself.

MAP SHEWING THE RAILWAYS IN INDIA IN 1869.



Such is the sphere of action within which the Government of India prosecutes its onerous and responsible work. Above the clamour of editorial voices is heard that of the Administration, conciliatory though firm, enforcing its authority not solely on approved principles of British law, but with due regard to the complications of existing Hindoo and Mahommedan codes, as well as to the dogmas of ancient usage.

The incongruous mass of land schemes, the muddle of municipal measures, the insecurity of the citizen, the indefinite position of the ryot—all that legacy of confusion bequeathed by Mahommedan rule—is gradually assuming an aspect of form and order. Only twelve years have elapsed since the country was smitten with social anarchy and an impoverished exchequer. Now it is blessed with peace throughout its bounds, and, speaking in a general way, with an income of fifty millions sterling to pay a debt of only twice that amount. Refreshing signs of material progress begin to relieve the stagnation of former times, while the work of moral regeneration proceeds with a rapidity and precision unknown in the record of empires.

Annexed is a copy of the last official map of Indian railways, completed, in progress, and projected. The first group, as was indicated in a previous portion of this volume, embraces 4,096 miles; the second comprises about 1,820 miles, and includes the great trans-peninsula line (now said to be just on the point of completion), which will connect Calcutta with Bombay; while the 'projected' routes consist of about 10,000 miles, which, if they advance at the computed rate of 300 miles per annum, will be finished, perhaps, in thirty-three years hence.

I have already alluded to the significant fact that nearly the

whole of the people of India, yielding hereditary prejudices to considerations of economy, have chosen to travel together in third class carriages. The figures relating to this point, as now given in the report of the 'Government Director of the Indian Railway Companies,' are as follow :—

'Total number of passengers conveyed, 15,066,530; being an increase of more than a million per annum during the last two years.'

'Of the 15,000,000 carried last year, only 130,000, or less than one per cent., were first class; and 535,000, or about three and a half per cent., were second class.'

Here is presented to the moral reformer a circumstance seemingly insignificant, which involves a portentous consequence. A practical benefit, offered impartially to all, is breaking down in effect the evil it rebukes in principle. Men of high caste are induced to associate with those whom their vanity had ever taught them to shun; the Brahmin rubs shoulders with the Pariah. And so the power of caste, that ancient social monstrosity which no ethical or religious arguments could subdue, is yielding to those influences which follow in the steps of human progress through the intercourse of nations.

As in the railway map, so in the chart of reclamation and irrigation schemes, we are impressed, not so much with what Anglo-Indian energy has accomplished, as with the extent of the task it has undertaken to fulfil. That task will not be the work of a single generation. It is true, however strange, that our very knowledge of the country is yet exceedingly imperfect. Throughout that wide expanse of territory, Government continues to prosecute its investigations, by means of scouts and

commissioners, and to receive 'reports' concerning tribes of whose history we are as ignorant as they are of ours. Far apart from the great highways of intercourse, communities exist who, as we are credibly informed, have scarcely heard a whisper of the downfall of Delhi, or obtained a glimpse either of men or things pertaining to the great innovating power which is now transforming the face of the country.

It is equally true, however, that the work of progress in India can appear small only when viewed in connection with the vast field of action lying around it. The millions who really are cognizant of the change have at least partially realized its influence. Not only have they seen marts of commerce created, waste lands redeemed, wide rivers spanned, and parched fields watered, with a vigour of enterprise hitherto unknown in the history of the country, but they have found new sources of industry growing up around them, and marked an increasing yield of the *Fusly Rubbee* and *Fusly Khereef*—the spring and autumn harvests. For we may reasonably attribute the more frequent dearths of late years, in a great measure, to the temptation which the enlarged demand for Indian cotton, jute, and seeds offered zemindar and ryot, in many parts, to cultivate these articles of produce on lands where food formerly was grown.

Hindoos, who have scarcely ceased to regard with feelings of mingled distraction and awe the wonder-working power of the electric telegraph, whereby friends far apart may hold instantaneous converse, and the fleet course of the fiery locomotive, which bears the pilgrim band to shrines three hundred miles distant in the interval between the rising and setting of the sun, have begun to recognize the advantages which such agents

are calculated to confer. It cannot but be seen and felt that these are not merely means for self-extension which commerce has devised, but also swift messengers of mercy and ready ministers of justice, whereby famines are relieved, and man's life is shielded from cruelty and wrong. And beyond towns and villages the intelligence continues to spread, that British rule has abolished all cruel customs like *suttee* or infanticide, and holds such measures as schools of science and medicine, the formation of roads and canals, the extension of commerce, and the cultivation of the land, to be more conducive to individual happiness and national prosperity than the observance of *Dewali* or *Shivaratri* festivals, or all the powers of divination and astrology. So far we can trace the steps of the great revolution.

But overshadowing this land of promise appear two little clouds, in which some political seers of our day distinguish a presage of disaster. Of these sister evils, one is external and the other local. There are Russians outside and Mahommedans within. The Russo-Indian or Central Asian question, not long since discussed in the British House of Commons, is by no means a new source of interest and apprehension. Although nothing came of the elder Napoleon's proposals (the first made in 1800 to the Emperor Paul and the second to Alexander seven years afterwards), to organize a joint invasion of India, Russia has steadily continued to advance in the East; and the subject has acquired fresh prominence and importance since 1864, when Prince Gortschakoff issued to the legations and embassies that official circular regarding the limits of Russian progress the tenor of which has been falsified by subsequent events.

Of course I am not about to attempt any disquisition on the

question. But it may be well to notice regarding it that the views which seem to be popular among English statesmen are, to some extent, at variance with the tone of the Anglo-Indian press. Among reputable authorities, indeed, purely opposite and conflicting opinions prevail. On one side it is maintained that Russia, whatever her secret desire might be, could not possibly push an army forward to our Indian frontier, the approaches being virtually impassable. It is held that the political history of Turkestan, where she is now extending her power, is a tale of prolonged internecine strife ; and that before further progress is practicable, many years must be devoted to the subjugation of savage tribes and the reclamation of desert wastes. Added to these barriers is the more material obstacle of the Himalayan wall (the highest mountain range on earth), which towers above Cashmere, and guards our whole northern boundary. Any attempt to penetrate through Afghanistan, where the obstruction is supposed to be weakest, would involve a march, by way of Herat and Candahar, of 1,400 miles ere the British dominions could be reached. And, it is maintained, whatever route might be selected, the prospect of a Russian army wandering for some hundreds of miles among glaciers and eternal snows, dragging heavy ordnance and transport waggons over precipitous heights and through abysmal ravines, is not one of which we need have any serious dread.

But, on the other hand, we are invited to consider the historical *fact* that invading armies have actually descended on the Punjab from the North-West. If Alexander the Great and the Mongol conquerors could thus lead their forces into India, what insuperable obstacle now bars the way to Russia ? Or granting

that such elevations are naturally impassable for the ponderous engines of modern warfare, what facilities may not be furnished by engineering science, which has already pierced huge mountains and spanned their heights with railways, as witness the Alps in Italy, the Bhore Ghaut in Bombay, the work now progressing *in* Mont Cenis, and that wonderful achievement which connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans?

Then it is alleged, if the Russians should cross the Oxus, and advance on Herat, that city, which certain authorities represent as utterly defenceless, would readily become their prey. And, finally, such a footing once gained, what forbids the supposition that Mahommedan fanaticism, instinct with a special hatred to British rule, and Afghan treachery, of which we have already had some experience, might, won by the allurements of Russian gold, combine to favour the scheme of the new Christian power?

Meanwhile, Russia continues to diffuse her influence through the steppes beyond the Hindoo Koosh; assuring the world, as she does so, that her object is simply to quell the tumult of confusion and disorder in a region where oppressed and suffering tribes are misgoverned by tyrant Shahs and Khans, and so to fulfil the task assigned her by Providence in the glorious work of civilization on earth.

At the same time the Indian Government has deemed it expedient, by means of friendly intercourse and pecuniary assistance, to conciliate the present Ameer of Afghanistan—a policy formerly adopted with good effect in the case of his father, Dost Mahomed. Sherz Ali indeed, after his splendid reception

by Lord Mayo at Umballah, went home to Cabul laden with many gifts besides bags of rupees. His Highness, as we learn, was presented with fifty-one 'trays' for himself, twenty-one for his son, and twenty-one for his chief sirdars, sustaining valuables which must have dilated the dark eyes of the recipients with wonder and delight. For the sparkling variety comprised such objects as jewelled turban-ornaments, gold and silver cups and tankards, a gold snuff-box and keyless watch, expensive diamond rings, gold embroidered silk and velvet dresses, guns and revolvers embossed in silver or gold, and splendid Cashmere shawls. A stud of beautiful Arab horses was also included in the presentation.

It should be recollected, however, in view of possible contingencies, that the Ameer was not thus complimented and assisted by the State either in respect of ambitious projects of his own, or of the possible encroachments of Russia. The chronic state of political agitation existing among the tribes at our northern frontier has been considered by Lord Mayo, as it was by Sir John Lawrence, a sufficient reason for cultivating the friendship and confirming the position of the *de facto* sovereign of Afghanistan.

But now as regards the supposed enemy *within* the camp, it is well known that, like the Jews in the days of the Roman Empire, a considerable section of the Mahommedan population in India look for a deliverer who will upset the ruling power and restore their own supremacy. The *Jehad*, or 'Crescentade,' according to the public news, is preached in many a mosque, from Patna to Dacca. Wandering Wahabees (our deadly

enemies for more than half a century) perambulate the North-West, proclaiming in market-places and among tombs the approaching downfall of the Kafir. The ignorant masses are encouraged to believe that the Prophet's messenger will suddenly appear, a resplendent figure on the northern hills, whence descending, he will lead them to victory over the Infidel, and retire in glory to await the dying Faithful among the delights of Paradise. It is credibly stated that in Berar and North-Eastern Bengal, a tax, levied by the leaders in support of the *Jehad*, is cheerfully paid by those who can afford to do so, the very poor contributing even to the extent of a handful of rice abstracted from their daily meal.

The authorities of Dacca, where, perhaps two-thirds of the population are Mussulmans, have frequently importuned the State on the serious nature of this movement, which, it will be remembered, was broken up in 1864 at its head-quarters in Patna, when some of the more active spirits were brought to trial. Only last year measures were again taken to interpose the authority of the law. The following is one of the most recent items of newspaper intelligence on the subject :—

THE WAHABEES.—Our contemporaries are awakening to the danger of the Wahabee conspiracy, to which we drew attention a year ago. The 'Englishman' throws some further light on the present condition of the Sittana colony. The Wahabee cause still maintains its hold upon the Mussulman population of Lower Bengal, and on even more distant localities. Recently a remittance of Rs. 15,000 arrived from Mecca, at the very time when Moulvie Abdoollah's funds had run out. A native prince is said to have contributed Rs. 26,000 in one donation, and his sister is called the 'Huzrut Mehal.' The *siarut*, or contribution for the maintenance of the sect, is collected from men of substance in all the

large towns, while all Mussulmans in the country, down to the peasant who leaves his handful of rice at the village mosque, seek merit by their offerings in support of the holy cause.

But here, again, a theory of tranquillity stands opposed to that of alarm. The security we derive from the enmity existing between Mahommedan and Hindoo is enhanced by the dissensions prevailing in the Mahommedan body itself. For the religion of Islam, schismatic and unsettled, is pre-eminently a polemical creed in India—where different races are gathered under the crescent flag, and local traditions are mingled with the orthodox tenets of the Mussulman faith.

Further, it is popularly believed that, of the thirty millions of Mahommedans in India, only a small proportion are of the Mogul and Pathan races, to whom alone belong that energetic character and vindictive temper from which we have anything to fear. Among other authorities on this subject, an intelligent Mussulman correspondent of the 'Friend of India' urges that a *Jehad* among his compatriots 'is not possible in this nineteenth century, or at any distant date,' the people being at variance among themselves. 'A Soonee would more readily join the Christians than he would a Sheeah; and an Ahmedee would more quickly co-operate with a Wahabee than with either of these two sects.' This statement, however, seems scarcely sufficient to dispel such apprehensions as may prevail on the subject. Nor are alarmists likely to be reassured by the information which follows, to the effect that the intelligent order of Mahommedans are 'conscious' that the sacred war of their religion is to be waged only in 'Darul-Islam,' the seat of Mahommedan government, and not in 'Darul-Harub,' the land of

the heathen. There can be no doubt that this division in their ranks greatly disarms the Mahomedan body as an aggressive power; but the psychological argument fails as applied to a class of partisans whose actions have never been regulated by considerations of that nature, and whose common creed is the Koran, in which no such distinction is taught.

One thing at least is certain, that if danger really exists, whether through the prospect of insurrection or invasion, the means of refuge must be sought in the sympathy and regard of the main body of the people. In their hearts, more than in city forts or frontier armaments, lies the true citadel of British power. And manifestly this haven is not to be reached through the guidance of those moral and religious enthusiasts who deem it sinful to bear with any form of paganism. Men who are practically acquainted with India best know that rigid modes of reformation are unsuited to such a sphere of action—that in every stage of advancement conciliation must go hand in hand with justice. Experience, indeed, here only echoes the voice of reason, which tells us that the trammels of ignorance and bigotry cannot suddenly be snapt asunder—that the prejudices of ages will not disappear at command. To curb therefore, with an intolerant rein, even the wildest flights of native ignorance and fanaticism, were an act worse than useless, and altogether at variance with the lessons of observation.

So far as human foresight extends, the policy of Government is suited to the purpose in view. That the English sceptre was supreme would scarcely be a subject of congratulation, were not its power manifestly transforming the face of the country, and revolutionising the lives of the people. The present generation,

indeed, cannot witness the fruition of those remedial measures which are already in progress, much less of such projected schemes as an Euphrates Valley or trans-Persian Railway system, connecting Europe with India. A portion of the Anglo-Indian press urges the propriety of immediate attention to this subject, with reference to which it may be observed that the prospect of a 'through line'—say from Calais to Calcutta—although necessarily distant, is by no means chimerical. A network of railways already occupies a great portion of the intervening ground; and in view of the projected branch from Bombay to Kurrachee, the formation thence of one or other of the connecting links which have been suggested cannot be regarded as a totally impracticable project. The obstacle indeed seems to be more of an ethnical than engineering nature. A road for facilitating British intercourse with India passing through the dominions of Russia, Turkey, and Persia, not to speak of other minor territories, suggests those uncertainties which belong to State treaties and professions of international good faith. In Hindostan, itself, moreover, such indigenous evils as plagues and famines, unruly tribes, and an unwieldy criminal population, occupy a place in the chequered prospect of the future, and, for a time at least, must continue sufficiently to perplex the Administration.

Not only, however, is the machinery of material advancement in active play, but a light like the dawning of day at last gleams through the moral darkness of the land. Those caste disputes, which embittered human intercourse, and which the prejudiced decisions of the *Punchayet* were only calculated to complicate and prolong, are now being referred, by mutual consent, to the

judicial tribunals of the country. By the *Brahmo Somaj*—a name now on the *tapis* of public affairs—we are to understand nothing less extraordinary than a movement among Hindoos the object of which is *the destruction of Hindooism*. Like the French deists of last century, the 'Progressive Brahmos' deny the authenticity of all scriptures, having, strangely enough, passed at once from amidst the multitude of the heathen gods into the solitary region of theism. But their existence as a class is a strange, suggestive feature of Hindoo society, deriving fresh significance from the completed erection in Calcutta of their temple, the Brahmo Mandir, wherein, for the first time as an organised body, they met in August, 1869. And it appears that, while the congregation of the Bharatbarseea Brahmo Mandir were engaged, to use the precise language of their formula, in worshipping 'one only God,' 'Creator of All, Omnipresent, Almighty, All-knowing, All-merciful, All-holy,' abjuring that of any 'man or inferior being or material object,' and inviting to the tabernacle 'all men and women, irrespective of distinctions of caste, colour, and condition,' the unwieldy cars of Jugger-nauth, which had been dragged from their receptacle to celebrate the annual festival at Serampore near at hand, lay in the ditch, 'with the idols on them, and flags flying,' for want of willing hands to convey them to their destination! There are thus indications that the old unsightly fabric of Hindoo superstition is at last tottering to its fall.

Again, if the act of conquest or annexation is to be estimated in the light of contemporary circumstances, England may prosecute her great Asiatic scheme with a conscience unassailed by remorse. Practically, we have known India as a vast theatre

of military strife, overrun in turn by such freebooters as Hyder or Tippoo, and by tyrants like the Moguls and Mahrattas, aided by certain 'royal families'—the agents of their misrule. No one acquainted with the course of events can have failed to mark the contrast existing between the circumstances of the former *régime*, in any of its aspects, and the present condition of affairs. The stolid apathy of Delhi in the recurring emergencies of public life has been replaced by practical efforts to relieve them; and the overawed silence of the million has broken forth into the voice of popular clamour, raised through the medium of an extensive free press. The people have fairly begun to reap the fruits of a higher legislative administration than that of native rule, in the scope and character of the law, the regulation of courts of justice, the promotion of popular education, and the extension of civil and religious freedom. Above all, they are finding a new and profitable source of occupation in the great scheme of land cultivation, and those other extensive branches of industry which owe their existence to the tropical growth of a foreign commerce, which has increased in the manner already indicated. And here it seems important to notice in a word the reciprocal influence on our own country of the wide field of consumption thus developed. The annual value of British produce and manufactures exported to British India (exclusive of Singapore and Ceylon) may now-a-days be roughly estimated at twenty-two millions sterling; a sum which represents nearly one-eighth of the total amount of these exports to all countries, and includes in its extensive enumeration of articles the following principal items :—

Cotton Goods	about £10,500,000
Cotton Yarn	" 2,000,000
Woollens	" 500,000
Iron	" 3,000,000
Machinery	" 1,000,000
Copper	" 1,000,000
Beer and Ale	" 500,000
Coals, &c.	" 250,000
Hardware and Cutlery	" 250,000

Such figures afford an idea of the nature and extent of the connection now subsisting between the markets of India and the fabric of British productive power; especially manifesting the fact that our cotton industry, with all its numerous ramifications, is dependent to a large extent on this great outlet.

Finally, it is evident that in these and the other statistics of trade to which I have alluded at intervals, we perceive the source alike of past prosperity and of future hope—the power which has been slowly but surely raising India above the shadows of ignorance and mysticism into the light and liberty of day. So noble is the vocation allotted to commerce in the economy of national life—so faithless are those of its followers who debase it with the word of falsehood or the act of fraud!

Nor is there reason to doubt the further development of the great moral and material reformation which has thus been inaugurated. In each of the three Presidencies, the class of natives with whom our Anglo-Indian countrymen are associated, alike in the routine of public affairs and the ordinary work of life, have proved themselves intelligent and steady; while, as we have seen, the rising generation are engaged in acquiring, through the medium of efficient schools and colleges, a knowledge of modern science and history, together with all the learn-

ing of Persia, Greece, and Rome. If it be said that we are thus rapidly creating a power capable of discarding our sovereignty, what then ? The world's business will pursue its course ; and posterity, tracing the footsteps of British rule in India, will say that here a great nation acted a noble part on the stage of human progress. From the fulfilment of a purpose at once so stupendous and beneficent, England might be well content to retire ; not for the barren enjoyment of a name, however grandly and worthily earned, but for the display of her energies in other fields of labour, and the diffusion of fresh blessings among mankind.

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